971.004924
C35
v.47-48
1993
ptie

CANADIAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

FOUNDED BY SAUL HAYES, O.C., Q.C., LL.D., F.R.S.A.
FIRST EDITOR LOUIS ROSENBERG, F.R. Econ.S., F.S.S.

Nous nous souvenons

NEW SERIES 48

Forgetfulness leads to Holocaust;
Remembering is the root of redemption.
(Baal Shem Tov)

THE CANADIAN STORY OF REUBEN BRAININ
PART 2

Compiled by
DAVID ROME

Edited by
NAOMI CARUSO AND JANICE ROSEN

NATIONAL ARCHIVES
CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS

MONTREAL, CANADA

1996

ISBN 0-921895-62-3

ISSN 0576-5528

NATIONAL ARCHIVES of the CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS
CANADIAN JEWISH ARCHIVES, New Series:

Number	Title
1	Early Documents on the Canadian Jewish Congress, 1914-1921, 69 p. (1974)
2	Inventory of Documents on the Jewish School Question 1903-1921, 118 p. (1975)
3	On the Jewish School Question in Montreal, 1903-1931, 136 p. (1975)
4	Canadian Jews - Early in This Century by B.G. Sack) 95 p. (1975)
5	Our Archival Record of 1933, Hitler's Year, 112 p. (1976)
6	The Congress Archival Record of 1934, 131 p. (1976)
7	Jewish Archival Record of 1935, 119 p. (1976)
8	The Jewish Congress Archival Record of 1936, 148 p. (1978)
9	On our Forerunners - At Work, 94 p. (1978)
10	On our Forerunners - At Work - Epilogue, 98 p. (1978)
11	On Jules Helbronner, 98 p. (1979)
12	On Mackenzie King and Jewish Sweating Labor, part l, 91 p. (1979)
13	On Mackenzie King and Jewish Sweating Labor, part 2, 77 p. (1979)
14	On Sunday Observance, 1906, 126 p. (1979)
15	On the Early Harts, part l, 105 p. (1980)
16	On the Early Harts, part 2, 118 p. (1980)
17	On the Early Harts, part 3, 100 p. (1980)
18	On the Early Harts, part 4, 99 p. (1980)
19	On the Early Harts, Their Contemporaries, part l, 110 p. (1981)
20	On the Early Harts, Their Contemporaries, part 2, 152 p. (1981)
21	On the Early Harts, Their Contemporaries, part 3, 132 p. (1981)
22	On the Early Harts, Their Contemporaries, part 4, 124 p. (1981)
23	On the Early Harts, Their Contemporaries, part 5, 136 p. (1982)
24	Benjamin Hart and 1829, 120 p. (1982)
25	Samuel Becancour Hart and 1832, 165 p. (1982)
26	Anti-Semitism I - The Plamondon Case and S.W. Jacobs, part 1, 104 p. (1982)
27	Anti-Semitism II - The Plamondon Case and S.W. Jacobs, part 2, 121 p. (1982)
28	On the Jews of Lower Canada and 1837-38, part 1, 98 p. (1983)
29	On the Jews of Lower Canada and 1837-38, part 2, 100 p. (1983)
30	On the Jews of Lower Canada and 1837-38, part 3, 108 p. (1983)
31	Anti-Semitism III - Early Anti-Semitism: Threats to Equality, part 1, 111 p.(1983)
32	Anti-Semitism IV - Early Anti-Semitism: Across the Dominion, part 2, 112 p.(1983)
33	Anti-Semitism V - Early Anti-Semitism: The Voice of the Media, part 1, 121 p.(1984)
34	Anti-Semitism VI - Early Anti-Semitism: The Holy Land; Tardivel, 151 p. (1985)
35	Anti-Semitism VII - Early Anti-Semitism: The Imprint of Drumont, 124 p. (1985)
36	The Immigration Story I - The Jewish Times, etc., 114 p. (1986)
37	The Immigration Story II - Jacobs' Opponents, 134 p. (1987)
38	The Immigration Story III - The Yiddish Theatre; the Adler, 108 p. (1987)
39	The Jewish Biography of Henri Bourassa, part 1, 112 p. (1988)
40	The Jewish Biography of Henri Bourassa, part 2, 108 p. (1988)
41	The First Jewish Literary School, 144 p. (1988)
42	Men of the Yiddish Press, 140 p. (1989)
43	Bercovici of the Adler, 116 p. (1990)
44	The Drama of our Early Education, 146 p. (1991)
45	The Education Legend of the Migration, 126 p. (1991)
46	The Heroes of Montreal Jewish Education, 113 p. (1992)
47	The Canadian Story of Reuben Brainin, part 1, 115 p. (1993)
48	The Canadian Story of Reuben Brainin, part 2, 115 p. (1996)

SPECIAL EDITION: Breaking New Ground, Struggle for a Jewish Chaplaincy in Can. 76 p. (1994)
CLOUDS IN THE THIRTIES, ON ANTI-SEMITISM IN CANADA 1929-1939, 13 Sections

For further information: National Archives
Canadian Jewish Congress
1590 Ave. Dr. Penfield
Montréal, Qué. H3G 1C5

CANADIAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES

FOUNDED BY SAUL HAYES, O.C., Q.C., LL.D., F.R.S.A.
FIRST EDITOR LOUIS ROSENBERG, F.R. Econ.S., F.S.S.

Nous nous souvenons

NEW SERIES 48

Forgetfulness leads to Holocaust;
Remembering is the root of redemption.
(Baal Shem Tov)

THE CANADIAN STORY OF REUBEN BRAININ
PART 2

Compiled by
DAVID ROME

Edited by
NAOMI CARUSO AND JANICE ROSEN

NATIONAL ARCHIVES
CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS

MONTREAL, CANADA

1996

ISBN 0-921895-62-3

ISSN 0576-5528

CANADIAN JEWISH ARCHIVES - Serial Publications

Founded by Saul Hayes, O.C., Q.C., LLD, F.R.S.A. (1904-1980)

Original series, compiled and edited by **Louis Rosenberg**, F.R. Econ. S., F.S.S., numbers 1-6, 1955-1962

New Series, compiled and edited by **David Rome**, M.A., Ordre nationale de Québec, Doctor of Laws (honoris causa), numbers 1-47 , 1974-1993

Volume 48 compiled by **David Rome** and edited by **Naomi Caruso** and **Janice Rosen**, with editorial assistance by Phyllis Kimia

This volume is dedicated to the memory of David Rome (1910-1996)

CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS (Founded 1919)
1590 Avenue Docteur Penfield
Montreal, Quebec
H3G 1C5

tel. 514-931-7531
e-mail archives@cjc.ca

National President — Goldie Hershon
National Executive Director — Jack Silverstone
National Archives Chairman — Pearl Grubert
National Archives Director — Janice Rosen

FC
106
J8C35
v. 47-48
1993
pte 2

CONTENTS

Preface	i
Brainin at the Canader Adler	1
In the Editor's Office	7
His Family	13
His Columns	17
A Sampling	17
The Tailor's Strike	19
Anti-Semitism and its Causes	24
The Yiddish-Hebrew Language Debate	27
On Religion	29
On Chassidism	33
On Jewish Identity	38
His Sketches	41
The Messiah Infant	41
A Jewish Wife	43
A Tempestuous Man	45
A Conversation	47
Brainin and Montreal Philanthropy	51
Radical Ideologies	54
New Jewish Institutions	59
Children on Strike	63
Brainin on Strike - The Adler	66
The Rift in the Jewish Community	69
Tension	76
The Zionist Council Reacts	80
Fading of Brainin's Efforts	91
The Jewish Legion	96
Der Veg, A Paper with no Precedent	97
Brainin's Personal Crisis	104
Brainin's Disappearance	107
The Nature of the Prophet	109
Brainin's Third Career - Hors Série	113
Index	116

Editor's Preface

Volume II of The Canadian Biography of Reuben Brainin has been much delayed in its appearance, as author/compiler David Rome passed away in January 1996. Although the remainder of the text had been written by Rome nearly four years ago, gradually failing health kept him from being able to bring the manuscript to its finished form.

During the last years of his life, translating into English selections from the golden years of the Yiddish press in Canada became his foremost passion, resulting in hundreds of pages of text. The original conclusion to the Brainin story could easily have filled another volume in addition to the present one, as the narrative broadened to include a whole coterie of writers in Brainin's circle, and of his Montreal era. It was decided, given budgetary constraints as well as due to some of the complications present in the unfinished text, that the greater part of these extraneous narratives would be eliminated from the present volume. These texts have not, however, been discarded, and can be consulted through the CJC Archives with the help of computerized search tools.

For months I had endeavored to devote the necessary time to proofreading and refining the typescript. My progress, however, was slow and sporadic. The eventual completion of Part II of The Canadian Biography of Reuben Brainin was only made possible by the generous efforts of Naomi Caruso, a Brainin scholar in her own right, who read, analyzed, corrected, made suggestions, and in some cases rearranged the narrative in order that the story would be told clearly and comprehensively.

In our editing efforts, our primary motivation was to remain true to David Rome's original intent for the text. We have also retained Rome's non-standardized method of transliteration for Yiddish and Hebrew words, in order to maintain consistency with the preceding volume. Nonetheless, in certain instances we took the liberty, for the sake of clarity, of rephrasing or eliminating problematic sentences.

We hope that the resulting volume does justice to the complex character that was Reuben Brainin, and to the memory of David Rome's prodigious career as a compiler and interpreter of Canadian Jewish history.

Janice Rosen
Montreal, November 1996.

BRAININ AT THE CANADER ADLER

Brainin's few years in Montreal journalism began with the Canader Adler from March 3, 1912 - December 1914, and later continued with his own Der Veg, Oct. 1915 - June 1916.

He arrived in the city on March 1, and was greeted by the Adler with a large photograph on the front page. B.G. Sack described the reception in the Adler in March 1912 in honour of Brainin on his accession to the editorship.

Brainin assumed the editorship of the Adler after a sharp conflict between Wolofsky and Wortsman because the editor claimed that the publisher had violated the contract.

A year later Brainin recorded the sad circumstances of his arrival in Montreal. It was in this bitter frame of mind, examining his conscience over the failure of Hadror, that Brainin relates the beginning of his new-found stability in this city.

"I was ill, depressed, broken, despairing, defeated. In this hour without hope, when all rays of light were extinguished, H. Wolofsky, the owner of the Canader Adler of Montreal, came to me as the saviour, presenting himself, and staying with me for six days, promising that if I accepted the position of editor of his Yiddish newspaper he would enable me to establish a Hebrew platform. Yiddish, the maid, would provide the means of generous subsistence for me and my family. I could devote my spare time, my energy and my talent to Hebrew; my only desire was to be its priest without reward in the temple of my mistress.

"He opened the door and I entered. I grasped at a straw as a drowning man. I believed fully that here, in Montreal, I could build a platform for Hebrew literature; that I will have some repose here -- that the pains of my body, of my spirit and my soul will heal.

"But my eyes have since been opened".

A few days later he was visited by "Peter Bercovitch, probably the greatest attorney in Canada, whom I had invited to discuss the new periodical I proposed to establish. The lawyer is one of the distinguished leaders of the Liberal Party who is highly regarded by Jews and Christians. He has been among my friends since I first came to Montreal. When a banquet was organized in his honour six months later, with prominent municipal and other official leaders, I had been named chairman; I then foresaw him as a coming deputy to the House of Commons.

"I asked him whether he would assist me in establishing my new publication, he promised me everything. I was not happy with his promises. The word 'No' was absent from his vocabulary. When he heard later that I proposed a daily paper, he turned his back on me and my proposal.

"I accepted the service of a Yiddish newspaper when I had no choice. My Hadror was shut. The Hebraists remained far from me. There was no helping hand, no consoling voice, no offer of hope. On the contrary, every one blamed me for hoping to restore Hebrew literature in America, for hoping that I could create a platform for Hebrew in the New World. They blamed me for not listening to advisers and leaders who sought to destroy my soul and to turn me into their spokesman.

"I followed my own path, without aid or support. I fell, and no one helped me rise. And who were those who were mocking me and laughing at me? They had all pretended to love the

Hebrew language, to appreciate the renaissance of Hebrew in America; they all have promised to stand at my side in the battle. I had believed them and trusted in their promises; most of them were betrayed. They crushed the Hadror violently.

"They wanted to be rid of me because I was independent; I was my own self, not their selves; I had no desire to be a *shofar* for their choir and for their educational office; they saw in me a moral force, for I told them the truth to their face in all its purity, for I fought them where and when it was necessary; nor could they buy me with money or with words.

"I was left without a slice of bread and my family was in Europe in a terrible plight, with no means, drowning in debt and devoid of hope, refugees from a sinking ship, waiting -- it happened in Belgium -- for rescue".

In the New World he was deeply disappointed with himself, and the communal workers associated with him. As he told it later, "I had betrayed the central ideal of my life, the star which had been haunting me with no respite. I had been a captive in the garbage yards of the *jargon* (Yiddish), longing for the Temple of my Hebrew princess whom I had deserted, even though my heart was pledged to her to my last breath. It would have been better if my children and my family had starved, than that I should have left my lady for whom I had sacrificed years of my youth and manhood. I had sinned some thirty months ago by becoming editor of the Adler. I desecrated my priesthood and trod the crown of my glory with my feet."

A.B. Bennett records in his memoirs of Montreal "a gentleman by the name of Harry Wolofsky, publisher of the Canadian Jewish Eagle (in Yiddish, Canader Adler) in Montreal, conceived the bright idea -- daring and bold, indeed -- of inviting and inducing Brainin to come to Montreal and take editorial charge of this daily paper. People -- the cognoscenti -- in New York and in Montreal were amazed, flabbergasted, if I may use the colloquialism, at the very thought. Brainin, the great Hebrew stylist, the renowned literary critic -- a classical figure among modern Hebrew writers -- Reuben Brainin in Montreal, editing a Yiddish paper!

"Well, the thing happened. Wolofsky knew his business. Overnight his provincial paper leaped into prominence and commanded international notice. Brainin had friends and admirers all over Europe, and many felt constrained to follow Brainin's writings in his new medium. But even more, the prestige that Brainin lent the (Canadian Jewish) Eagle soon paid off in Montreal. Folks in Westmount, the moguls of Shaar Hashomayim and the nabobs of Temple Emanuel, heard the news that a world celebrity had settled in their midst, and their curiosity led them to accord recognition to the enterprise with which he was associated. Wolofsky and the Eagle gained new status and prestige in circles which would ordinarily not have deigned to pay them the slightest heed.

"I met Reuben Brainin and his beautiful gracious wife and their children in the spring of 1912. I had come to Montreal, after my examinations in Honours English, in my third year at Queen's, to become editor of the Jewish Times for the summer. I had heard of Brainin, had read many of his essays, and was anxious to meet the great man.

"I recall that before I went to see him I puzzled as to whether I should conduct my conversation with him in German -- a language which he was accustomed to using as a result of his long residence in Vienna and Berlin -- or in plain Yiddish. Speaking German would have presented some difficulties. But Yiddish it was.

"For the first two or three years Brainin seemed to be happy in Montreal. I was a frequent

guest in his home. After I had gone back to Kingston I managed to visit Montreal fairly often (I had met a beautiful young McGill freshette during my summer in Montreal - she is now my wife) and I had a strong motive for desiring to go to Montreal at every possible opportunity. Brainin apparently had made peace with the idea that his break with Europe was permanent, and it was up to him to make the necessary adjustments in his new setting.

"He found many conditions in Montreal which could make life more pleasant and useful than in New York. In Vienna and in Berlin he had lived in a world of cultural amenities. The people that surrounded him created an atmosphere where books and ideas and movements were the stuff of which life's realities were made. Such an atmosphere could not be expected on this continent. New York was a jungle. Even in the literary circles of the metropolis one would look in vain for serenity of the spirit, or conversely, the stimulation of intellectual questing. Most of the Jewish men of letters were identified with parties and cliques, and were not so much servants in the temples of the spirit as hucksters in the market place of ideologies and partisan groupings. In Montreal, where the communal air was pristinely fresh and clean, one might hope to find an environment where one's gifts would be afforded useful play.

"What could Brainin actually offer to Montreal, and what could Montreal actually offer to Brainin?

"For one thing Brainin and his family -- his gracious wife, his charming daughters, and his European-bred sons -- fashioned a home which was unlike anything in Montreal. Theirs was a place where books and art and ideas were the central theme of interest and discussion.

"Visiting Jewish writers and scholars naturally gravitated to the Brainin salon. And the intelligentsia of Montreal -- mainly of the Yiddish speaking brand -- found in the Brainin establishment a friendly environment in which their ideas and pretensions could enjoy a satisfying airing.

"Apart from his activities in his paper which gained real distinction under his editorship, Brainin deemed it his duty to lend a guiding hand to the various institutions which formed the complex of the community's endeavours. The community was comparatively new. Situations were constantly cropping up which demanded a due appropriation of the community's good will and energy. Brainin realized that the tone of the community's endeavours, representing its processes of self-realization in the new milieu, could be heightened by imparting to it a touch of the large vision of Jewish purpose and destiny. He suffered himself to be led by his publisher, who had intimate knowledge of all the goings on in the community, to all manner of functions to give them a lift by his presence and inspire them with a greater sense of importance as builders of Jewish life in their city. Brainin, I believe, enjoyed a feeling of new strength, an awareness of expanding usefulness in new areas of exercise.

"Were these activities compatible with his talents and his personality?" ("Brainin in Montreal", in Jewish Standard, April 1, 1962, p.3)

Bennett again recalled: "I came into personal contact with the Eagle in the halcyon days of the Brainin regime. Reuben Brainin, one of the most famous Hebrew writers of the era, had moved to this continent and happened to be unaffiliated with any New York journal. It was a stroke of genius on Wolofsky's part to perceive the possibilities of the exploitation of Brainin's great prestige in the interests of the wobbly Eagle.

"Wolofsky wanted his paper to be outstanding in its field. He concluded an arrangement with

Brainin to come to Montreal to take editorial charge of the Eagle. The provincial journal instantly achieved world-wide Jewish importance.

"Brainin was a man of majestic appearance. He was at the peak of his literary fame as a Hebrew stylist and essayist. His wife was beautiful and the Brainin home became the centre of cultural interests in the community.

"Brainin had not written much Yiddish before and his language was inclined to be a bit Germanic. But Brainin was a man of broad European culture and outlook, and his editorials and articles were marked by literary grace and erudition. The people of Montreal accepted the Brainins with deference bordering on awe. Westmount, the non-Yiddish sector of the community, paid homage to the great man, and shared the general pride of the populace in the presence of the famous litterateur in their midst. The Eagle and its publisher basked in the glory of Brainin. The tributes paid to the editor were tributes as well to the publication and the man behind it. Locally, the Eagle became a factor to be reckoned with, in all phases of communal activity. Zionists, of course, had to recognize the intellectual leadership of Brainin in the realm of their concerns. Heads of local institutions felt constrained to defer to the notions of 'Herr Brainin' in the matter of Jewish values -- for after all was he not the man of international reputation? And beyond the limits of Montreal and the borders of Canada, wide circles of Jewish leadership took notice of Brainin's editorial adventure and followed the policies of his paper with great interest.

"Brainin had spent many years in Berlin in an atmosphere of literary challenge, remote from the grime of everyday life. His environment was one peopled in the main by scholars, writers and artists, and the currency of their society was that of ideas and movements and ideologies. In Montreal, he had to come in contact with masses of ordinary folk, engrossed in the play of commonplace interests and motivations.

"In 1912, the second year of Brainin's stay in Montreal, I spent the summer in that city editing the Jewish Times, as a summer job during my university vacation. Then I met Brainin and we became fast friends. Before I returned to Queen's University, at the end of the summer, Brainin persuaded me to attempt writing for his paper in Yiddish. I had read a great deal of Yiddish literature, and knew Hebrew and German quite well, and was therefore, in a measure, equipped to try my hand at Yiddish. The experiment proved successful, and I continued sending articles to Brainin from Kingston. In fact, I believe I was the highest paid outside contributor to the Eagle. I received the munificent sum of five dollars for three articles. Brainin saw to it that I received the maximum honorarium by often splitting single articles into two or three instalments."

Bennett was among the first whom Brainin introduced to Yiddish journalism and Jewish philosophy and sociology. With Bennett came Dr. S. Ortenberg, Yehudah Kaufman, the Yampolsky brothers, B.J. Goldstein, B.G. Sack, Jacob Malamut, Konrad Bercovici, Joseph Goodman and a team of men of the pen from Winnipeg and Toronto.

They were remarkably prolific, particularly during their Montreal years. The period before Brainin is virtually blank, and, except for Kaufman, is also a blank after Brainin. Their writing was confined to Montreal when he edited the Adler, and in his Der Veg during its few years of publication. We seem to have no documentation of his relationship with these men (there were no women). However we cannot state that Brainin influenced their creativity other than the welcome that he always extended to them, in the Adler.

Continues Bennett: "In those days, Brainin surrounded himself with a group of intellectuals and fringe intellectuals. Chief among his coterie of disciples was Yehudah Kaufman, who had come from the Sorbonne to continue his studies at McGill because he wished to be near Brainin in Montreal. Michael Garber and I were among the inner circle of Brainin's friends. The late Caiserman and Yoineh Myerson moved within the orbit of Brainin's influence. We were all interested in Jewish affairs, the transcendent significance of the Jewish picture in its historic dimensions and in its broad international manifestations. In our midst was a personality who saw the Jewish scene in its complete aspects; a man of learning and vision who transmuted Jewish communal trafficking into a play of destiny. He wanted Jewish life in this land to take on the beauty and grandeur of the drama of the Jewish struggle for survival. ("The Eagle Aloft", in The Jewish Standard, December 15, 1957)

In Canada and especially in Quebec the most effective group of Yiddish activists in speaking, reading, writing, and teaching the language on a world scale was the Poale Zion. It was formed as a faction out of the World Zionist movement some five years after Herzl's death. Its aims were to work for a Jewish state based on labour principles, for exiled Zionism, for Yiddish and Hebrew, for Jewish education, and to combat assimilation.

This movement in eastern Canada was founded in 1908 and became militant simultaneously with the Adler, and not by hazard.

Quite aside from its program, it was its organizational militancy and the distinctiveness of its Zionism, the cultured nationalism of the coherent elements of the labour movement, that marked its vigour. It created its socialism, labour unionism, education, chalutzism, Yiddishism, Hebraism, feminism, comradeship, and its political historical mark for nearly a century.

S. Schneour, who gave the movement its name of Poale Zion, came to Montreal in 1908 and was among its founders, major journalistic pioneers, and idealized champions, with the Adler as their major instrument.

In 1910 the movement sponsored a network of Jewish libraries and a series of Jewish schools in Yiddish and Hebrew all over the world -- not least and not last in Canada or in Montreal. It took the rest of continental Jewry half a century to catch up with this achievement of Poale Zionism.

In the intervening months each day the Adler was gaining in strength, and by March 1912 Brainin came to a remarkable newspaper.

B.G. Sack warmly recalled the years of his collaboration with Brainin in the Adler: "...the fraternal interest he showed in me and in his fellow workers; it was not only the interest of an editor but of a man of friendship, an author who encourages others with kind, friendly words."

The imprint of his personality upon his colleagues was durable. Sack records gratefully Brainin's visit to the family home; they would spend hours in fine conversation.

Sack remembered that "at first Brainin found it difficult to accustom himself to his role as editor of a Yiddish newspaper in a new, largely Yiddishist, environment. But he slowly adapted himself to this society and came to give it the best he had. The newspaper became one of the best in Yiddish journalism, with articles on art, on books and on current affairs. The age of Brainin, brief as it was, left deep marks upon Montreal Jews that are still visible; the Jewish

Public Library, which he founded together with Y. Kaufman, is a reminder of the period when he lived here." ("The Yiddish Press in Canada", in Yiddisher Kemfer, Passover, 1957, pp.146-48)

IN THE EDITOR'S OFFICE

As we seek out Brainin at work in Montreal we are faced with two contradictory written sets of credible testimony. Each set constructs a powerful profile of a man living intensely in the metropolis. But it is almost impossible that they both refer to the same person of flesh and blood, or that the two minds, souls, emotions, loves dwell in one mentality.

One corpus of writing is the diary, (dated sometimes uncertainly to the critical reader), the secret but now available record of the agonizing captive, surrounded almost each second by those he despises. The other is the printed daily newspaper which he created, consistently, with continuous enthusiasm for totally contrary causes -- a testimony that is widely circulated, public: a militant man at work, with intelligent, admiring colleagues, with his signature under every line, attested to by a score of the most critical minds of his time working at his side day and night.

Yet his night diary speaks destructively of the testimony of the day's work.

It is a confusing condition for the reader of the records, and waits for the psychologist with his magic key to present the true nature of the whole man and all his facets. In the mean time we can only review the facts before us.

Brainin published this impressive Yiddish newspaper in a very personal way. He brought to his readers the contribution of the best Yiddish authors, most of whom he knew intimately; including I.L. Peretz, Sholom Aleichem, Mendele Mocher Seforim, Jonah Rosenfeld, Abraham and Sarah Reisen, Nahum Sokolov, der Nister, Z. Schneour, M.J. Berdichewsky, S. Bernfeld, Baal Machshoves, D. Frishman, H. Nomberg, M. Nadir, S. Asch, P. Hirshbein, and J.M. Weisenberg.

Among the other contributors whom Brainin welcomed to his pages were Montrealers A.B. Bennett, young Yehudah Kaufman, Israel Figler, L.M. Benjamin, J. Kirschbaum, his brother Isaac Brainin and his son Joseph, and Ontario resident M. Grafstein.

Brainin's editorship of the Adler constitutes a fascinating chapter in the annals of Canadian Yiddish literature.

He signed daily editorials of considerable length which were more personal than the usual newspaper editorials. It speaks volubly of the readiness of the publisher and readers of this newspaper that all accepted the particular literary output of this atypical pamphleteer-littérateur.

Clearly his attitude to the reader-friend is much friendlier, more loyal and positive, and more truthful in reflecting daily life than the resentful attitude revealed in the diaries.

In balance, the attitude and the treatment of Brainin by the total community is another complex story. The latter justified his private bitterness. There are character elements, political, personal and family complications which explain the nature of Montreal and the total painful Brainin epic.

Central among the positive elements in the story are the individual literary stories of the Yampolskys. This was the first meeting of Brainin with one of Canada's leading Yiddish authors, Isaac Yampolsky, and his younger brother Moshe Leib, who were distantly related to

Sholom Aleichem. They were also related to Reuben Brainin through Mrs. Isaac Yampolsky.

Isaac Yampolsky was an active revolutionary (Zionist socialist) and had to flee Russia to Galicia whence he came to Canada in 1904. He came first to the farm settlements of the Jewish Colonization Association, then he settled in Saskatoon as a teacher of Hebrew, and later in Winnipeg, before coming to Montreal to teach in the Talmud Torah Anshei Sefard in 1908, and to write in the Adler on editor Wohliner's invitation.

Brainin and I. Yampolsky were to be close personally and in their literature until Brainin's last Canadian day, which was also the Yampolskys' last day as invited writers in the Adler.

Isaac Yampolsky documented his own picture of Brainin in the editor's office.

"I have clarified in my notes to my friend, who has for some time left me free, but now has come to miss me and visited me in the editorial room, that:

"A Jewish editorial office is a community centre, a day and night chapel populated by all sorts of people, and the editor must be there all day and all night functioning as judge, rabbi, advocate, sustainer of life, supporter of those falling, healer of the sick, liberator of the imprisoned, the man of much powers, the friend of the Jews, counsel, doctor, psychiatrist, philanthropist, executive, immigration officer, social worker, intercessor, procurator, public defender, pleader, collector, family defender, protector of the humiliated, collector for the needy and persecuted, guarantor of Talmud Torahs, employment agent, loan commissioner, protector of women, children and of workers, and visitor of the sick.

"The editor must hear everyone patiently, every bitter heart, everyone's troubles, all complex issues and cases which Jews have with the world. No one considers when the editor will do his work, when he will write what he is obliged to, when he will read the mountains of manuscripts and books which arrive daily at his desk which he is obliged to review. I am jealous of the traditional 'Good Jews' who could besmear the angels in the heavens -- but since your servant is not a good Jew, I must, by virtue of our manifold sins, be my personal self; my brain and effort and pen what I have to say and print.

"Regardless of all this, I deeply enjoy the visit of my friend. Whoever comes to me, I become aware that he needs me and the newspaper. It is only when he needs us; otherwise he would never see us, directly or indirectly.

"A rich man once told a poor Greek philosopher, 'What good is your philosophy, I am greater than you, because you come to me for a loan, but I never have occasion to come to you.' The philosopher responded, 'I come to you for what I need, and you respond. But you never come to me for the wisdom which you lack, because you are unaware of your need.'

"My friend comes to me, and gives me pleasure. He never comes empty handed; sometimes it is with simple news from the city, all of which he hands to me, leaving nothing for himself. Indeed he sometimes adds some of his own piquant decoration to his factual report, and tries hard to interest me, so that I may hear him.

"Where does he find the interesting city news? That is his own secret, from the first source, before anyone else, and more than anyone else, and before telling it to anyone else. When he feels that I have no interest in those public affairs, he tells me an ancient, half baked tale or fresh tale, Is there anyone who is not a customer for a fine sharp Jewish joke?

"But when my friend notices that I was not moved by his wit -- he had not drawn a laugh or even a smile from me -- he favours me with some good counsel, with friendly advice on how to write my sinful editorial so that the goat remains whole and the wolf sated, that both sides are satisfied, both right and left, that it burns like fire and is cold like ice. Sensing his failure, he hands me a severe sentence, preaches some morality and warning; do not touch this, nor the other; we need not laugh at all costs, for in our hearts we despise them all; the rich and powerful, men of family and strategy are not being provoked when they call light night and the editorialist needs to proclaim it is night, absolutely. These superior ones having declared the profane sacred, the editorialist must declare that it is the purest of the immaculate. If those leaders are misleaders, the editor must call to all his readers; flock of sacred ones, follow the just shepherd with eyes shut, even in pain, he is your philanthropist, your protector and your guide.

"In short my friend often lectures me in editing, and -- why deny it? -- to you and to myself; he is my teacher and rabbi, yet he is dissatisfied with me, this poor disobedient pupil.

"'I see you will never cease to be the greenhorn, never become the American or the Canadian wise man.' Apparently, he is not wrong....

"Yesterday he visited me in the editorial room, after an absence. I had not seen him for some time. 'What is new, my Jewish friend?'

"Troubles, pains; debts, complications. His face was very sad.

"Why so downcast? You are accustomed to this after time and circumstances; now your nose is low. The Jewish God still lives and he does not forget his people Israel.

"'But he has forgotten me,' my friend contradicted me. 'Yet I have not asked for much. Does a Jew need millions? I asked but twenty thousand dollars. Does a Jew need ten suits? I would have been satisfied with two or three; thirty underthings? Two or three would do me, a half dozen shirts, a gold watch.'

"'And what would you do with such riches?'

"'I would wish but one thing, to be on the Empress of Ireland and sink with my treasure and escape with one shirt.'

"'And what would become of your twenty thousand dollars and your three suits, and your half dozen shirts, if you escaped with one shirt?'

"'I would at least be able to speak of one shirt. As it is I do not have even this.'

"My poor friend." (Adler, probably 1914)

Isaac Yampolsky devoted a vivid column to describe "A Day in the Editor's Office" with Brainin (April 3, 1913).

"May God help anyone who is punished for being jealous of an editor by endowing him with corns on each of his fingers so that he will be unable to take a pen in hand.

"God helped me and I became a member of the editorial staff; that is, I sit behind the editor's shoulders and make sure that the waste paper basket does not overflow and bring the editor back to life when he faints.

"I want to tell you of only one day in his life. You will lose your appetite to be an editor.

"Just imagine him sitting, his eyes buried deeply in his desk writing. I am beside him whistling a melody. Behind the door the reporters scribble quietly, peacefully. Suddenly a knock on the door and, before both call 'come in,' a woman grows up at our side, with child at her hand and says to us,

"'Are you the editor?'

"'Sit down,' he says to her. 'What can I do for you?'

"'I am asking you to put him in the papers and bury him deep, my husband, I mean. He deserted me two years ago because I was yelling at him, he said. Do I yell? It is only my habit. I speak loudly.'

"'What can I do for you?' the editor begged.

"'What do you mean? He doesn't support me.'

"'But there is the court house.'

"'He has disappeared, and the devil knows where he is.'

"'So go to the Baron de Hirsch Committee.'

"'They have no God in their heart.'

"'There is no way I can help you,' the editor said, out of patience.

"'At least you can write him up.'

"I interposed, 'Do you have a photograph?'

"'I have two.'

"'Keep one and we will put the other one with the Missing Husbands.'

"She thanked me and the editor thanked me for ridding him of her.

"When I came back I found another nuisance plaguing the editor for the address of the rabbi of his town.

"'I don't know your town and don't have the address of its rabbi,' the editor defended himself.

"'I am trying to get rid of my plague.'

"I tried to be helpful, 'I think our *Shochet* (kosher slaughter) is from your town. Here is his

address. Go to him quickly before he is off to the slaughter house.'

"Before he is out the three typesetters rush in, ink-smudged noses and sleeves rolled up like robbers. 'Manuscripts, please. The machines are idle'.

"'Just a moment, take what I have ready. By the time you have done this, I will finish the rest.'

"They are no sooner out when an important visitor who cannot be so easily dismissed comes in. He had written a report of a masquerade that his society had sponsored.

"'I don't like to trouble you,'" he said sitting downexpansively, 'but why did you allow my report to pass with a mistake, with a 'yes' instead of a 'no'?'

"'It was the proof reader who missed it.'

"'Why do your articles always come out right and my report has an error?'

"I interrupt him, 'Your handwriting is crooked.'

"'I always write at an angle.'

"'Our proof reader is also slant-eyed.'

"The editor is panicky. I told him I would stand at the door and tell all comers that he is not well to-day. I had not moved an inch when a cylinder with a beard barged in, a passing reverend.

"'What is it that you want?'

"'I just want to get to know you. I will speak in a synagogue on Sabbath, so I'd like you to write something about me.'

"The editor promised and said good-bye to him.

"The next visitor was the choirmaster of the Welcoming of the Bride Society arranging a concert during the weekend, here to invite the editor to the event, after he would write an editorial on the worthy cause. I suggested an advertisement instead.

"I return to the office and see the editor writing feverishly. The pen bends under the speed and races like fire. If anybody will interrupt him I will throw him down the steps head first. I enjoy watching him write and I am jealous of his fluidity and currency. It is a great matter: a man like any other man writes thought after thought and the paper is filled with thoughts. It is taken downstairs and the written thoughts are printed in thousands of papers and the tens of thousands of readers tell them to each other.

"I take up my pen and also write. We both write. Writing is like a milk cow. As long as the milk comes, we milk. When the milk stops coming, we milk it anyway.

"'Take it downstairs, please. I don't want to see their faces.'

"I meet the three typesetters at the door.

"The editor lights a cigar: I a cigarette. He begins to plan the next day's paper. But a young man appears with a naive poem which he reads to the editor; he hints he has many more at home -- when the editor promises to take the first poem. I whisper to him that the editor is a jealous man who throws into the basket good poems from new writers.

"After he leaves the editor reminds me, 'Our Jews are indeed the people of the book.'

"The telephone rings. 'You wrote in your paper that I caught a thief in my store and that he split my head.'

"'And he did not split your tongue?'

As we were putting our coats on he said, 'You can go crazy here.'

"'On the contrary, it is cheerful here.'

At the door we come to face with a newcomer who has written an article on prostitution and socialism; he is proud of his handwriting.

"'Do you read Yiddish papers?'

"'I can only write.'

"'Do you read books?'

"'No, but, I write very well.'"

The editor glanced at the manuscript and returned it. 'It is written on both sides of the paper. When we give it to the printer it has to be written on one side. You as a beginner wrote it on the side that is not to be written on.'

"'But I do have talent, don't I?'

"'You will work your way in,' we tell him and he walks away happy.

"We are happier having survived a day in the editorial office."

HIS FAMILY

One of the closest of Brainin's friends in Montreal was his son-in-law, Dr. Sholom Samuel Ortenberg (1887-1976), father of Mrs. Judy King, articulate custodian of the family memories. He had been born in Suczawa, Austria, and had been brought to Quebec City at the age of three. He and his older brother Ben Zion were educated in the provincial capital.

"Ortenberg finished high school at 16 with a governor general's medal and a scholarship to McGill, and came to live with the Budyks. His mother knew that the Budyks were kosher so he lived with them until she came and visited him once. Then he lived somewhere else.

"He wanted to study medicine, didn't want to study arts. So he forfeited the scholarship and went into medicine at the McGill Medical School at the age of sixteen. In those days five years was the whole study of medicine. He used to say, 'I couldn't treat a sick horse today with what I graduated with.'

"He graduated in 1908; he was 21 years old. He then went to study in Berlin and in England for a year as an intern. He said once he went to a restaurant in Berlin and he ordered one of their dishes. It was delicious and he asked the waitress what it was. She told him it was pork and he promptly vomited. He had never eaten pork.

"He worked in the Isle of Wight in a hospital and in London. He loved England and he wrote home and said he would like to stay in England; could they send his things?

"He was the baby of the family and his mother's favourite. He got a big case with his belongings. When he opened the case there was a note on top from his father who wrote, 'in this case are your mother's tears'. So he didn't unpack, he went straight back home."

"He went on the staff of the Montreal General Hospital, the first Jew, I believe, because his mentor was Dr. A.H. Gordon, who liked my father and took him on the staff. As a matter of fact, when my father died, the Montreal General Hospital flew the flag at half mast." (from Eiran Harris interview with Mrs. Judy King, Feb. 8, 1989.)

Dr. Ortenberg was one of the local "giants of medicine" early in the century. In the Adler, Dr. A. Stilman described the group, including Drs. Norman Viner, A. Bercovitch, Alton Goldboom, M. Wiseman and D. Ballon, as high minded followers of the Maimonides humanistic, religious and scientific tradition.

Mrs. King, Brainin's grandchild, also remembers well her other grandfather, Dr. Ortenberg's father.

"Eventually he came to own a store, either together with his son Ben Zion or a separate store on St. Joseph street in the old section (of Quebec City), down near the railway station.

"They lived on St. Dominique Street. At the top of St. Dominique Street, two blocks away from St. Joseph Street, was the *cheder* that my grandfather was instrumental in founding. It was at the foot of the cliffs.

"That street is nearly all demolished now for a traffic interchange about 10 storeys high. There is a big complex of traffic overhead. I believe that the *cheder* is now a warehouse.

"My Quebec City grandfather was a very austere man. When I look back he was as forbidding as one of the elders of Salem, that's how I always think of him. He originally had red hair and a red beard which turned white with age, still with red hairs among them. He was a kindly man, although he seemed forbidding, but when I turned 13, I couldn't kiss him anymore, and if I got my Chanukah gelt he'd put it on the table and that's where I got it, and not from his hand. There wasn't a closeness as there was with my other grandparents."

She says of grandfather Brainin, "I remember big meetings in Montreal when I was a child, where I was sitting on the platform on my grandfather's lap and falling asleep in the smoke-filled rooms with shouting and everybody talking, in the audience, on the platform, everybody. What kind of meetings they were, I don't know. I also remember standing beside my grandfather when he was receiving people. He was sitting down and I was standing.

"I was aware of people making a play for me to get my grandfather's attention. I was not a very pretty child but they would make a fuss over me and expect my grandfather to be grateful for it. I remember thinking as a child how some adults can behave badly." (from interview with Mrs. Judy King, Feb. 1989.)

Samuel Ortenberg was one of the founders of the student Maccabean Society in 1904 when there were fewer than a *minyan* of Jewish students at McGill; they included Louis Fitch, Feinberg and Solomon.

After returning to Canada in 1910 at the request of his mother, Dr. Ortenberg practiced with great distinction until 1974, leaving a mark upon Montreal medicine, having made important contributions to its developing science.

In 1913, Dr. Ortenberg was called in as the Brainin family physician, and met their daughter Miriam. The Adler reports that their engagement was feted at a reception on Feb. 9, 1913 at the Brainin home at 2588 Park Avenue. He later married her. Their daughter Judy was born in 1915.

Judy King remembers: "My mother, being trilingual in French, German and English, immediately began to teach French to the immigrants at night school at the Baron de Hirsch Institute." But tragedy struck the household five years later when Miriam Brainin Ortenberg died during the influenza epidemic.

To keep the family intact Mrs. Reuben Brainin arranged for her husband's sister Lisa to come from Europe and marry the bereaved Dr. Ortenberg.

Mrs. King notes, "My father married two Brainins. He had married Reuben Brainin's first child, and then he married Brainin's youngest sister. My grandfather was 30 years older than the youngest of those fourteen siblings, so they were the same age, within a few months."

Dr. Ortenberg was connected with many important institutions; the Montreal Protestant Hospital, then the Montreal General Hospital, the Fresh Air Fund and the Women's General (the Reddy Memorial) Hospital. Later, he helped to organize the Jewish General Hospital while serving on the faculty of the medical school at McGill.

He was one of the founders of the Herzl Dispensary (in 1912) and attended at the Saturday clinic. He aided the Red Magen David for the Jewish Legion in Palestine in 1917, was one of the founders of the Montreal Clinical Society, and was medical contributor to the Mount Sinai

Sanatorium and the Hebrew Orphanage and Sheltering Home.

At the same time he was active in the Jewish Public Library and People's University and, in 1916, he served as secretary of the Canadian Jewish Congress in formation.

In 1915 he lectured before the Poale Zion Youth together with Caiserman, Schneour and Kaufman and wrote on the Chicago opera in Der Veg (Nov. 23, 1915) and on Professor H. Laski at McGill (Nov. 28, 1915).

He was one of the Young Turks in the Zionist movement which overthrew Clarence de Sola who had served as president of the Canadian national organization for twenty years.

A man of great Jewish integrity and constant thirst for Jewish learning, it was natural that the arrival of a man of such culture as Brainin would attract the young doctor to the circle of the editor of the Adler. Their friendship became very intense. In 1916 he entered the editorial department of Brainin's Der Veg as medical contributor.

The Canadian family tradition was strongly Jewish, as Brainin's granddaughter formulated it:

"You mixed with anybody from any country or any cultural background, but not to the point of forgetting you were Jewish, never, never on both sides of the family.

"You couldn't tell if my grandmother was Jewish, when you looked at her. She looked like a Russian *shiksa*, sophisticated -- but never forgetting who (she was). As timid as I was as a young girl, if anybody ever said anything about Jews, because I wasn't always taken as Jewish either, I'd let them have it. That all came from the family.

"My grandfather (Brainin) was not religious. The Ortenbergs were very religious, very narrow, in a way. The Brainins didn't observe *kashruth*, (kosher dietary laws) or not riding on Sabbath, or anything like that. They were very idealistic and much of the money they had they shared with poor students wherever they were. Their home was always the centre and people didn't come with food in their hands. You feed people, it costs you money.

"The Brainins celebrated the holidays in my house. My mother always bought kosher meat but she didn't *kasher* it. I never went to school on the high holidays and we had our seders, 25 to 30 at all our seders. It was always my mother who made it, centre of the family. I was forced to go to Sunday school, my father went to say *kaddish* but he didn't go regularly to *shul* in spite of his upbringing.

"My father said I had to have a Jewish education. We lived on Prince Arthur Street, near McGill and belonged to the Shaar Hashomayim and I had to go to Sunday school with all those snobby kids. Maybe their parents weren't snobs, but when kids are in their teens, they think they're special and if you are from the slums, they give you a hard time. I must say the one who was the nicest to me was Gerry Bronfman. When the girls were snubbing me, he was nice. I had music lessons and I had Hebrew lessons.

"Sunday school didn't give us Hebrew lessons. They gave us Jewish history and religion. I didn't study for my confirmation. I had a private teacher for four or five years, different private teachers. My last teacher was the brother of Ariel Ben Zion, an engineering student at McGill, born in Palestine.

"I resented my Hebrew lessons but I was told I had to have them because my grandfather was one of the first writers in modern Hebrew, etc. etc. It didn't make any impression on me when I was little." (from interview with Mrs. Judy King, Feb. 1989.)

Montreal artist Ernst Neumann painted Dr. Ortenberg's portrait and designed a book plate for him featuring an inscribed scroll with the Cabalistic code "*Chachmah, Binah, Da'at*" (Wisdom, understanding, knowledge - components of the name "Chabad".)

Brainin's apostle-associate Yehudah Kaufman translated Ortenberg's essay on tonsils into Yiddish for the Adler of October 19, 1914.

HIS COLUMNS

A SAMPLING

One of Brainin's first Montreal essays after his ascension to the editorship of the Adler was a diary entry dated on a Quebec lake, a rare day in his life without reading or studying, spent in the enjoyment of nature's smells and repose, dedicated to his body rather than to his spirit.

"This wicked habit of ignoring my body is a habit I had inherited from generations who cared only for cleanliness and purity in honour of the master, the spirit, as commanded by the mistress, the family. Today I learned not from sages but from the plants and their scents, from rowing on the lake, from the timelessness of the landscape." ("Pages torn out of an old notebook", in The Works of Reuben Brainin, Vol. 2, N.Y. 1936, P. 268)

He called upon his readers to appreciate "Organization". "Where was the effect of steam, of electric power and magnetism before men learned to harness the powers of nature, to combine the mechanics of forces in the interests of human needs?

"Many lives remain as if buried, as if they had never come into being, futile, unknown to themselves, because they have never related to others in joint usefulness, by organization, the highest art of our time". (July 1, 1912)

Three editorials in early January 1913, "Writers and Readers", clearly intended to identify himself and his plans for his society, began with a summary of Thomas Carlyle who noted that the hero initially took the form of a divinity, then a prophet, then a poet and writer.

"Some fifty years ago Hebrew writers arose, took pen in hand to write in all sincerity and with sacred inspiration, under circumstances all their own. These elite Jewish authors did not even have an audience in those days, for the Jewish men anxious to learn or to enjoy the arts found their treasures in German or in other European tongues; their own creation had been in sacred works and, even though most of these were in reality great artistic achievements, they were read as if they were only liturgical in function.

"Before that time Jews had no authors, i.e. writers who live in contemporaneity, relate to their people, influence their people, teach their people. This type emerged with the press during the past twenty-five years, in Yiddish and Hebrew at once. As grains on the one stem is each writer with his public, his universe of influence, with his readers who have learned to understand him and to honour and love him.

"The chosen Jewish author has faith in the infinite potential of the Jewish masses as he draws his force, his purification from the Jewish people. Without such a sense of the genuineness of the large masses of the people, the author could not write every day and could not teach and encourage his readers.

"Each day the night is weakened, or disappears. The people sense instinctively who is close to them and who will be faithful to the last moment; and the author who speaks to them each day is not chosen by election or by a higher authority. Only his God-given awareness, energy and call turn the ardent love of his suffering kin into the people's thinker and ultimate leader, crowned by the people." (January 8 & 9, 1913)

Brainin recalled the status of the Jewish writer within the European community a quarter of a

century ago, when he began his own literary career. (Adler, January 17, 1913)

"A Jewish author with talent, spirit and creative ability -- not to speak of character, personality, consistency and purity of soul -- was recognized in all spheres and classes and became beloved of the people, even a popular hero.

"Our people lack men of great spirit who remain true to our nation, who create for our people and with our people; it is therefore a crime to limit these and stifle them within the bounds of the group."

Brainin was sensitive to the all too frequent pressures upon the government to slow down immigration into Canada, often at times of generally or locally depressed economic conditions.

"New immigration restrictions are harder and more difficult for Jewish wanderers who are most often forced to immigrate to lands of refuge.

"When Jews are not permitted to land or are deported, they have no country to go to, and might as well jump into the sea.

"Our community workers should have great foresight; if they have Jewish hearts they should be alert and fight immigration restrictions.

"The soundest political scientists have long shown that in difficult economic times, migration slows down automatically; even without restrictions, it becomes much smaller. Workers at times of unemployment return to Europe, and this restrains the stream of wanderers to America." (Editorial, Adler, June 1914)

THE TAILOR'S STRIKE

An open letter to Mr. Reuben Brainin, from Max Schneour, mechanical engineer, Cuthbert Street, Montreal, in Adler July 17, 1912,

"It was with great joy that I heard the happy incident that has brought you here to become editor of the Adler, a joy for the entire Jewish population to find you in our midst, at the head of the local Jewish press. You were received with enthusiasm everywhere, wherever you appear in public you appear welcomed, especially by the working population, which is the majority of the readers of the Adler.

"This working population was the happier to have a good paper to read and, secondly, it was certain that, in the event that a powerful word will be needed in its defence, it will come from you. And now to my point.

"There has been a tailors strike in effect for some six weeks, with 4,000 courageous heroes lined against paganist, sewer bosses; 4000 men fighting for their lives, for their rights, for the right to have more leisure to enjoy life. This is the first such phenomenon since you are in Montreal, and the question is, what are you doing for the strikers? Where are your editorials which should burn to defend the Jewish workers? Where are your ideals, your spirit to support equality and justice which you preach so often?

"I am no striker, and my personal hide is not affected. But as I observe the heroic battle of the brave working women and men, I am surprised at your attitude towards all these heroes. We do not hear a word from you. You might as well be a thousand miles from the battlefield.

"You have often quoted the Talmud in defence of ethical values. But your present indifference is a surprise to me, indeed a riddle. How can you not react, the champion of all that is noble and free, how can you be so silent in the issue, when you should be attacking the bosses? I remember my student days in Germany when you learned that the relationships between Russian Jewish students were not sufficiently moral. I remember that the pamphlets you wrote served as knouts to condemn them, I remember how we nationalist students would listen to your words preciously. I cannot allow your coldness to the strike, no matter under what pressure you find yourselves. I am more than certain that men such as you do not sell your ideals for a mess of pottage, and therefore express my surprise.

"You expressed in private that your sympathy is with the strikers. Naturally, how can it be otherwise? But we expect more than sympathy from you.

"You probably remember the story of the wealthy innkeeper in his warm room, full of sympathy for a poor man in the cold weather begging shelter, who spoke of the freezing man outside."

"Speaking and Silence" appeared in the same pages of the Adler of July 17, 1912 over the signature of Brainin.

"Our readers will find an open letters to me in this issue from Mr. Max Schneour.

"He is surprised that I have written so little about the tailors strike or, as he puts it, that I have been so silent about it (which is not quite true), that I have not poured fire on the bosses, and have not defended the workers.

"Truth to tell, it is not quite pleasant for me to place the letter before the public, first because it contains too much praise directed to my person. (I direct such mail generally to the waste paper basket). Secondly, the strike is not yet settled for me to explain fully why I have written so little about it.

"I nevertheless publish the letter to me verbatim because I do not wish to suppress an opinion which is honest and logical even if it is directed to me. I am the more willing to express opinions contrary to my own. The Adler is the only Yiddish daily in Canada, so I wish it to be a free tribune where everyone can find place in it, other than for insults, vulgarity, stupidity and trickery. There is space for everyone.

"Secondly, the open letter provides me with an opportunity to explain partly the real reason why I have written so little about the strike, why I have not poured fire on the manufacturers. I have been called upon to explain this daily, and I have refrained from responding.

"First, I wish to explain openly that my stand in regard to the strike has been completely free. The management of the Adler in this case, and in all others, have given me a free hand.

"The responsibility falls upon me alone. Whatever error I have made falls on me alone. No one else is guilty. I have never sought a scapegoat for my errors in all my life.

"Nor am I the man who can be dictated to as to what I shall write. I have written for twenty-five years daily on a variety of themes, Jewish and others, always in accordance with what I believe, always on my own responsibility. I would rather be a street sweeper than prostitute my pen. If I was at times silent, it was never because I had to be silent; rather because I wished to be silent, because I felt it better for the cause, that there is a time to speak and a time to be silent.

"I hope to God that Canadian air will not harm me, that America will not convert me in the literary manner which I have adopted. I hope to be true but to myself.

"I am a Zionist by perception. All my life I dream of the revival of Jewish culture, the humanist nationalist culture, through a renaissance of the spirit of Judaism and our people's genius, and thus bring all mankind a new world of redemption and liberation.

"Yet I have never forgiven Zionist errors and have fought a certain one-sidedness, narrow-mindedness, narrow cultural perception. In my literary activities and in my lectures I had another tactic: I have sought to introduce the most modern, broadly humane philosophical, literary and artistic streams into the great world literature.

"I am not a simple democrat, for I feel truly aristocratic. My ideal is the gentleman. I might be extremely aesthetic, but my total inner being belongs to my entire people, my heart is bound by a thousand threads with the masses of Jewry.

"I feel deeply that in these masses is hidden the healthy, fruitful seeds of our nation and its future. The genuine purest idealism, its purest aristocracy, the truest nobility and the highest measure of its readiness to sacrifice. If I did not believe in these hidden qualities, in its potential for development, in its potential for superior knowledge, in its sense of justice and its ability to rise in the highest social ideal -- if I did not believe in this with all the fibres of my body, I would not believe in the glorious future of the Jewish people.

"My ideal is that of the great prophets, the first and greatest battlers for social justice, for all that is beautiful and divine.

"I love the Jewish masses as my own flesh and blood, but I bear no hatred for the other classes of Judaism. Everywhere I see brethren, Jews and human beings. The varying social, political and economic conditions have divided the Jewish people into classes, into labour and capitalists. Capitalism in general is not religious, nationalistic, ethical if you wish, it is not aesthetic. Capital is an idol, a nation into itself, a Torah unto itself.

"But among Jewish capitalists, I know from experience and observation, there are moral, generous, gentle, fine persons, Jewish, I have never refrained from saying or writing about their great errors, corruption, cruelty and their lack of humanism in capitalism. I oppose the hatred among brethren. I cannot hate and despise brothers; I cannot despise the Jews, the rich among Jews. It pains me to observe the vulgar, the wicked, the corrupt, whether rich or poor, labourer or prince. I believe we must teach the truth to the masses and the Jewish rich. We must not flatter the masses or smile at the rich. Our prophets moralized to the masses and the powerful.

"May a blessing come to those who teach and refine the Jewish masses, who open their eyes to their true interests, who would bring redemption closer from slavery and to a speedier golden future and the end of oppression, poverty, wealth.

"But I oppose the system which trains workers to curse, to divide, to separate classes with jealousy, hatred, vengeance, which lowers the more powerful, the refined to the lower level of the masses, which says Amen to all that the lower masses' desire and feel, which has the courage to affirm all the desires of the rich, but not to moralize the bitter pure truth to the masses.

"Where we plant hatred we cannot reap gentle ideals. An atmosphere poisoned with hatred, hostility and curses can only see man created in the image of God grown crippled, deaf and blind to his own interests.

"When the Montreal strikers declared their conflict I deliberately wrote that their demands were moderate, justified, in keeping with human rights, human worth, in keeping with their demand to enjoy family life.

"But when I read the vulgar offensive insults of the Folkszeitung, the threats of the workers who fearlessly proposed to avenge themselves on the Russian ministers and the Czarist governor generals, that is to send them to a mortal end, I could see that the Bundists are lowering the socialist ideal more than their opponents are doing, for I believe that socialism is an ethical ideal, a historical inevitability that will not utilize such threats which deprive it of its worth.

"I recognize that their tactic was unwise. The Montreal strikers deserve human, feasible and just tactics, and sulphurous tactics only complicate the situation.

"If they had consulted me, I would have told you that there are situations in the life of the individual when the wise man is wise, but others when silence is a crime, when we must declare, speak, write on what is not well understood, when our further silence is impossible.

"I am in such a moment, and you have not understood my silence.

"I was silent in the Adler, but have spoken as a man and as a Jew. I have addressed myself to the manufacturer's association with an urgent appeal to settle the conflict, that the manufacturers consider the position of the workers for their minimum demands, for the entire population in the city and the country. They all heard me to the end.

"But I have also patiently heard the employers to the end, and I must admit I have not met any bloodsuckers, any enemies of labour such as the Folkszeitung portrays. They spoke as human beings with hearts and feelings, as friends of Jews and as friends of labour and as responsible human beings, who do not intend to starve the workers; that they will accord the workers what ever they bargain with the workers, and will not have outside men from the union control the factories. The strike broke out after the manufacturers had already sold the produce of the coming season to last year's customers at the prevailing rates. I have spoken from an ethical point of view, but business has its own logic.

"I have spoken with the current leaders of the strike and I am convinced that they are reasonable men who represent the interests of labour honestly and tactfully.

"The strike has endured six weeks. The thousands of Jewish workers have demonstrated a rare example of sacrifice and courtesy; they have never succumbed to incident. They and their leaders deserve much credit.

"My function has been to make peace between the parties, and I know that without the leaders there can be no peace.

"In my opinion it could have been settled long ago with considerable saving on both sides, direct and indirect, materially and morally, and it could have been avoided. Unfortunately, it has dragged unnecessarily by unnecessary talking, writing, misunderstandings, libels, stubbornness. The situation is becoming more difficult. In such a situation, with spirits more heated with every element seeing justice only on his side and the complaints deriving from his case not knowing the other side, with the abyss between them deepening, I believed my articles would only aggravate the situation.

"I am not a partisan. I stand outside or above parties. I can bring no peace to parties with my sulphur and fire. I am aware of the claims of both sides. Heated articles can only strengthen feelings everywhere. At a time like the present, where thousands suffer and a whole city suffers, it is a sin, a misfortune to appear with sharp editorials such as Mr. Schneour demands from me who seeks only justice amicably, for the men to return to work and to still their irritated spirit. In such a serious moment responsibility calls us to seek rest and reason. By phrases, provocation and phraseology we can only complicate the situation. All who accuse me of coldness, as if the tailor's strike were a thousand miles away from the battle scene, force me to say publicly that I would rather ignore it totally, or to reveal the secret that since the strike broke in Montreal I have known no rest but have given all my time to attain peace, to still the spirits. The air is full of explosives. Libel, hatred and revenge fill the Jewish moral atmosphere. Do you wish me to make the atmosphere worse, more poisonous? I chose to address myself to all the prominent Jews in the city, to invite them to the Adler, to help me make peace between the warring parties.

"Permit me now to tell the truth: the strike could have been settled earlier, if the manufacturers had been willing to meet in direct negotiations with the strike leaders, in the presence of three impartial persons. The difficulty lies in that the manufacturers maintain their original position,

that they will negotiate not with the union spokesmen but with the workers themselves directly.

"But after careful study of the inner psychology of the strike, I firmly concluded that without the union leaders the strike cannot be settled, and that such a settlement is not desirable even for the bosses.

"When the representatives of the Manufacturers Association will meet with the leaders of the strike, the latter will be convinced that they are dealing with human beings and Jews with hearts and sensitivity who do not seek to oppress the workers; that the employers are reasonable, honest and practical men. They will negotiate in the presence of impartial witnesses, and will quickly recognize what is possible and what is not.

"The leaders of the union -- Mr. Schweitzer, Mr. Altman and Mr. Barsky have assured me that if the manufacturers will officially negotiate with them and will recognize what is practical to-day, they will communicate this to the workers and recommend acceptance.

"The strike leaders have told me that they do not accept the responsibility for the libellous statements against the bosses that were circulated in the press or orally.

"When I commented to the strike leaders that manufacturers have in some matters intended to introduce open shop, the strike leaders asked, "How do you know, and how do the bosses know that we may not, under some circumstances, agree to accept such proposals?"

'"Why are you silent about the strike?

"Where are your fiery articles against the bosses?' asks Mr. Max Schneour and other friends of labour.

"Allow me a short anecdote: two friends ask whether silence or speaking is more important. One replies that speaking is more important because our thinking expresses our thinking, unites men, creates society and makes culture possible.

"The second states that silence is higher. We are silent in the highest moments. We do not have adequate words for the highest moments. The holiest moments cannot be expressed in words uttered or written, for these divide men, complicate relationships, dull thoughts, falsify our feelings, and distance what we would express or should express.

"At certain moments silence, not speech tells more than endless words and more than writing.

"In the name of Judaism and humanity, we appeal to both parties.

"Lay down your arms. Make peace.

"There must be negotiations between the manufacturers and the strike leaders.

"The strike must be settled."

ANTI-SEMITISM AND ITS CAUSES

On January 11, 1914 Brainin reported,

"Distinguished Jewish citizens last Wednesday discussed anti-Semitism in the Shaar Hashomayim synagogue. The discussion evoked contrary opinions.

"In truth this question should be considered in Christian circles, for it is their weakness, not ours; this illness their fault, not ours.

"It is a good thing that our thinking co-religionists are giving attention to this consideration which can lead to Jewish awareness.

"But it seems that not all participants in the Shaar Hashomayim had considered anti-Semitism from all sides or had dealt with it deeply or soundly.

"It was Clarence I. de Sola who approached the problem most deeply, but even so in part; not even he had delved to its final consequences.

"There was a basic error in all the discussions -- and particularly in the thinking of Mr. Michael Hirsch -- there was a basic error, as noted by the English press and by many in the audience: the cause of anti-Semitism is within non-Jews.

"I wish to recall incidentally that Ab. Kahn in his famed Montreal speech found the seeds of anti-Semitism outside Judaism, within Russian despotism. When this evil will be shattered totally this race hatred will disappear.

"But this approach is totally in error.

"For anti-Semitism exists and has struck deep roots in lands where despotism has faded long ago. All the more: There are freethinkers, revolutionaries who have liberated themselves from prejudices and other superstitions but cannot free themselves of anti-Semitic sentiments and approaches.

"In truth the sentiments on anti-Semitism expressed in the synagogue, like the opinions heard from Ab Kahn on this matter, were one sided and outdated by several decades.

"The literature on the causes of anti-Semitism has grown into a considerable international body. The historical, psychological and social sciences, anthropology and political movements have accumulated a rich storehouse of experience, documentation and fact that shed a light and explain anti-Semitism, in various countries and long epochs, from many sides.

"We now know that this vice cannot be explained by one cause. It has roots in religion, racism, economics, society and politics, and in many other causes.

"In some lands or epochs, the religious motives are stronger; in other areas and at other times we sense economic and social forces at work; at each time and in all countries anti-Semitism is fed by different sources. The external mask alters with time but is the same on the inside; the hatred of the strong toward the weak, of the many for the few, of the native for the alien and the newly arrived, of the victor for the defeated.

"The hatred of the Jews is prevalent; it is our heritage from the nations, the heritage of millennia, sought out by bland instinct seeking to justify many ends.

"German anti-Semitism has created a scientific literature which attempted to justify its hatred of us by religious history, by anthropology, the race problem, sociology, cultural history, national psychology.

"Hatred of Jews is the bland fear of the Aryan peoples of the Semitic, Jewish spirits. We are the bone in their throat that they cannot be rid of. Our culture is too rich, our spirit and national awareness too clean, too deep, unquestionable, too clear, too unassimilable to disappear. Their cultural body is too weak to digest it.

"They hate us not because of our faults but because of our virtues, abilities, because we have hearts and souls. They could forgive us for our faults, but not for our qualities.

"Unconsciously they cannot forgive us for having given them a God, a God who was a Jew, a religion of love which is alien to their spirit and to their bellicose instincts.

"We know that the cause of anti-Semitism lies not in us but in them, because we are socialists, revolutionaries, awakeners, restless spirits.

"Some hate us because we are capitalists, exploiters, blood suckers, superstitious religious fanatics or some because we are atheists, because we disturb religious sentiments, because we are sacrilegious, faithless; because we are unclean, stingy, because gold is in our soul, or because we live ostentatiously, beyond our means, luxuriously, in riches and glory. They cannot tolerate the culture which surrounds us, our ambition, our culture and our education, our pride even as we crawl and are aware of ourselves, of our great men, our geniuses. Some persecute because they do not know our history and our religion; others because they know our sages and our faith all too well.

"Because we know the psychology of anti-Semitism much better than we did a generation ago, our response must be altogether different than those who learned it long ago.

"We shall speak of it."

On June 3, 1914 Brainin was deeply concerned about the widespread anti-Jewish campaigns -- the continuing hatred campaign in France centring on the Dreyfus case, the Beilis case which had just relaxed in Russia where millions of Jews were accused of ritual murder, while at the same time, in the enlightened British empire, Jews were also facing similar charges in Quebec City.

On all levels it was the rehearsal for the universal holocaust. Brainin was not the only editor on the world scene, not even in Montreal -- the Canadian Jewish Times also understood the meaning of the Plamondon case, which stirred ancient hatreds against the Jews.

Brainin was in the midst of the eternal Jewish defence as: "Jews of various parts of the world, of different classes of strata, of unlike cultures and tempers and spiritual philosophies, faced the multifaceted conflict for their status, for their dignity, for their group and for their spiritual existence; for their individual lives."

"This blind hatred has evoked a universal wondrous solidarity of the scattered sons of Israel.

"This hatred endangers the material and moral position of the entire people, but the solidarity has awakened the Jewish people, does not permit it to doze and enables it to perform miracles of wondrous renaissance. There is a sense of larger unity beyond village and clans and synagogue, the fraternal relationship."

THE YIDDISH-HEBREW LANGUAGE DEBATE

Early in his Montreal career Brainin formulated a far-reaching analysis of the Yiddish-Hebrew debate and the place of English in the developing Jewish culture in the New World.

The conflict between Yiddish and Hebrew, which pits Zionism against the Bund, is a conflict between two conceptions of two worlds, between two Jewish worlds.

One is a world with a future and a past, roots, branches, leaves and fruits. The other is vague exile and a sterile present.

It is good that the conflict is raging.

Regrettably, there are many centres where the conflict never arose. Jews there need neither Yiddish nor Hebrew. Business is conducted in English, and they need neither Talmud Torah nor the Yiddish Peretz Schools.

There is an old fable that tells of the organs of the body quarrelling as to their primacy. The feet of a living, healthy man began to quarrel with the hands, saying that without them man could not exist, not walk, not move, and would remain a sort of *golem*. And the hands argued that they are the essential -- without them absolutely nothing could be done. The eyes began to fight with the ears, saying that they were the most important, with the ears taking the opposing position. In short, there was a feud between all the limbs and senses of the man, each one thinking itself to be the most important of all.

"Where the Jewish organism is sound and vital it can accept both Yiddish and Hebrew and all its spiritual and cultural events.

"When Yiddishists rejoice that Hebrew is forgotten, it is an unhappy joy, as when the feet are happy that the arms are paralyzed, for the disease will extend to the feet and other organs and senses.

"True Hebraists can never hate Yiddish, the language of 95% of the Jews of Russia, Galicia, and Britain.

"There are Yiddishists who, in their blind fanaticism, hate Hebrew and rejoice in its defeats, but Hebraists love all that the Jewish spirit has created; Yiddish is one such major creation of our people." (September 5, 1912)

Brainin participated in a colloquium on Yiddish as a language, in the Montefiore Club on January 13, 1914. In his editorial report he dwelt on the weakness of the Yiddish theatre and on the efforts that had been made in Montreal to fortify this phase of Jewish culture. A year before an attempt had been made to establish a permanent Yiddish theatre in the city to attract world class actors. Rudolph Schildkraut played six times at the Monument National. But the project did not enjoy continuity.

He noted the emergence of an unknown Montreal citizen, V. Magidoff who created a drama which was weak in spots; "the technique was rather helpless, the language unpolished. But Without Blood did have dramatic force. The problem it dealt with surprised me. It was new and unique. The creator is a beginner and lacks literary culture and stage technique. But his play impressed me greatly. We therefore urged the People's Theatre to produce it; the play

will open on January 15. The intellectual Jewish community will be interested in a dramatic talent which has risen in the local labour movement. (Jan. 14, 1914)

ON RELIGION

Like his entire educated generation, Brainin was complex in his thinking on religion and was tremendously informed on the Jewish faith, on Hebrew, on law -- and very sophisticated.

Certainly during his years of editing the Adler he published and wrote much on the subject, and his pages contain vast and serious lore on all phases of European Judaism which are difficult to characterise and are certainly impossible to categorize. Much of it is anonymous.

Brainin was realistic in his reporting on the traditions of Montreal orthodoxy.

"During the high season of our social life there is seething and boiling, smoke and powder: meetings, assemblies, committee sessions, elections, concerts, lectures, banquets, resolutions, conferences, balls, tag days, proposals, collections, protests, quarrels, intrigues, presidents, officers, secretaries, hand bills, posters, circulars, advertisements, promises, competition, jealousy, rumours."

Before the High Holy days in Montreal, on August 18, 1912 and on January 27, 1914, he wrote his series of editorials on religious life and practices in Canadian and Continental Judaism -- their hallowed traditions and "The Sanctity Business".

"The voice of the *Shofar* is beginning to sound in the synagogues, as during other years. The fair of the cantors, the Torah readers, and the other officials of the congregations is gathering. American Jewry assumes a different, peculiar face. Religion and its needs, customs, laws, prayers and poems become week-a-day business. The trading in synagogues, cantors, preachers and pleaders becomes the sacrilegious. The halls of last weekend where they danced to flirting songs, to winking humour, have been turned to worship, addressed to Him who examines the hearts of all on the Day of Judgement. On the morrow the confusions will return and who are the cantors, the spokesmen for this people, the intercessors between us the sinful and the Great and Only God?

"Woe is unto me if I speak, and woe unto me if I do not speak; and the borrowed stupidities and ignorance's pour from the reverends.

"The High Holy days were set for our brothers and children to elevate us above the daily material, to sum up our deeds of the entire year, our thoughts and reactions which are not worthy of the noblest issues. These days, when Jews feel almost as angels freed from their daily needs, they have become days of a particular business.

"That Yom Kippur I attended festival services in Montreal for the first time in thirty-five years in an orthodox synagogue. I have been yearning for the taste of an orthodox congregation on Yom Kippur for many years, the experience of the particular state of the soul of this fearful day, to be and to weep a whole day with these my people. Only this year it was possible for me to attend.

"Now I regret having done this. I am ashamed to have seen my people in their failure.

"The large synagogue was full of people in every corner and every passage, but never for a moment an elevation of spirit, of enthusiastic flame. Only cold Jews, storekeepers, card players, merchants who came to the house of God to plead confirmation of a prosperous year, entry into the blessing of those who will live, who will become wealthy, who shall be raised;

they do not care if his fellow man will die, will be impoverished, will fall.

"I glanced at the men at prayer and saw only dry and cold features, unrefined. No glory of faces. I felt I was among petty merchants, impertinent traders and flatterers. On my feet all day I did not feel the presence of one Jewish soul; I did not hear a Jewish sigh, a single shadow of the bowing of the heart, a touch of confession.

"Not one of them all, these believers who are sons of believers, felt he was standing before the King of kings on Judgement Day to report on all his acts. These bodies without souls had come to the house of prayer out of fear that they might lose the confidence of others in regard to fiscal matters or out of fear that He who sits on high might accord them an untoward year; they came out of old habit, out of the pressure of the Jewish environment, or to honour and to be seen in the place which is proper to them in the synagogue.

"These Jews stand before their creator as they might stand before their customers or before great merchants from whom they expect favours or even loans. Their hurried prayers are in a language they do not know. Their prayers are of men uncomfortably collating debts, praying that in doing so they are not angering the great, hard Lord above, the hard one who is vengeful of all who crossed him; they sing chants and praises to the father of mercies and flatter him with the full adjectival vocabulary of confession, of sins which they committed deliberately or unaware, and all this with no speck of faith, of modesty before Him. All this in a plea for His single swoop of pardon of all their sins so that they may continue to sin from this Yom Kippur to the Yom Kippur which is to come, in favour during the year ahead.

"What is the image the sons of my nation are putting up before their God? A storekeeper sitting at his ledger, writing and sealing, counting and entering, scales at hand, weighing the sins of each man, balancing scales. We present ourselves before Him, and appease Him with praises, as we crawl like worms before Him, the Person of virtue, we are but the wicked: He pleases to tear up the decree.

"Forgive them for lowering You below the quality of an angry squire, to that of a storekeeper to bargain with, to influence You.

"Lord of universes, look at the fearful grossness of Your people, the sons of Your nation, Your chosen tribe who do not know the awe of sanctity, the love of God who is so high.

"My younger son had been in the synagogue with me for the first time. He told me as we were coming out, 'Father, if I have been proud of my people and of my ancestry, attached to my nation and faithful to its greatness as the chosen of all -- this has been because you have not brought me to this synagogue before or to any other on a Yom Kippur day. You can be sure that if ever you bring me to such a Jewish house of worship, I shall leave my people, for to-day you have filled me with shame. I have seen card players here and well known evil doers who commit wrong every day of the year, who took time off to-day from their affairs to do their business quickly with Him who examines, who revives and who puts to death. With such an omnipotent Lord you cannot deal with several hurried prayers unintelligible to most worshippers." (October 1, 1914)

Brainin's religious philosophy was reflected in these occasional writings on religion. So he wrote "Tish'ah B'Av" on July 23, 1912,

"Tish'ah B'Av, the day of summation, of people mourning the commencement of our nation's

catastrophe, of our wanderings, of our perpetual dependence.

"How many tears and how much blood, how much tragedy, despair, poison, powerlessness and profound humiliation lie in these two words. On that anniversary we fast, sit on the earth, despondent in memory. So year after year, in set form, for lamentations and tears, for cantor and for congregants, for the meal before the fast and for the *Megillah* reading, the ritual is long prescribed in all its minutiae of rules and intentions.

"Mechanical weeping and mourning, are set out in the *Shulchan Aruch* (code of Jewish law), in the thick encyclopedias, the *Korban Mincheh* prayer book. So the Jewish people mourns its greatest tragedy. This only demonstrates how fearful is the fundamental tragedy of the entire race.

"In all our houses of worship, chapels, in our centres of study we repeat the threnody 'Zion, do you not inquire of the welfare of your imprisoned?' in the words of our national poet, Yehudah Halevy. The lines could melt the hardest stone, turn the strongest Jewish nerves into a well of tears.

"But look to the bound prisoners in all the lands of our exile, even in the freest of countries where our equal rights are recorded on paper, where Jews sit in high office and in national ministries. Even there our souls are chained, enslaved. The *Shechinah* (divine presence) is in exile.

"Some of our people sit on the floor as they fast, or spend the hours visiting graves; the others are in trade, laugh and amuse themselves as during the other days of the year. The exile is endless, and the soul even more so, for a people cannot be redeemed when it does not crave redemption, when it does not exert every effort, bring every sacrifice, when it is unworthy of it, when it is not inspired in every cell, at every level, with a mighty instinct and will for freedom from every yoke...

"In our time there is a consolation on this day of mourning only in the small group of our nation which would revive our culture, which would return our people to its land and its ancient land to our people."

From time to time Brainin exploded into the Adler print, scandalized at the level of communal developments. On March 13, 1913 he recorded his efforts to settle a case before the Toronto civil courts of a president of the city's largest synagogue who had been leading the community by the nose, stirring up trouble for some seven years and damaging community interests. He had forced two innocent rabbis worthy of appreciation and respect to appear in court to defend themselves against conspiracies and virtual blood libels. The case had stirred the entire city.

"I have spent five days and nights at meetings with the most respectable Jews in the city to prevent the matter from coming to court -- in a case which might bring misfortune and shame to all Canadian Jews. We invoked all means to place before Jewish authorities this case of a conflict between a *Shochet* (ritual slaughterer) and the two rabbis. These efforts were totally unavailing. The synagogue president was adamant that the rabbis must go to prison, for one of them had not conferred upon him the honour he did not deserve."

Samson Itayev inquired of Brainin on June 18, 1914 in regard to a religious matter; about to be married, he wished to invite his brother to act as best man. But the brother was married to a woman who had been married earlier to another man. Many friends stated that this is

forbidden by Jewish law. But the bride of Mr. Itayev insisted that their wedding be orthodox as planned, as a civil marriage would be unacceptable.

The editor said that there was no legal traditional objections to the brother being the best man, but in some regions the question had been raised, and there the custom became law. He advised the friends not to speak of the festivities.

ON CHASSIDISM

Brainin described a certain visiting Chassidic *Rebbe*, as "a grandson", an idiot and ignoramus, in two June 1914 issues of the Adler. "He had come to shear his sheep and to milk his cows. These visits of such fake *rebbeim* (plural of Rebbe) who come here to collect charities and to fool the people are a national insult. The Chassidim, or those who claim the title, run after every *Rebbe* and after every 'grandson' in the hope of being called Chassidim."

Brainin noted in early June, 1914 that in Friday's Adler it was announced that the committee, at the desire of the Radiwitzer *Rebbe*'s Chassidim, be retained for another Sabbath, to preside over another Sabbath in the Galician synagogue with another Thursday to preside in Quebec City.

"Since this notice did not state who these Chassidim were who desired the continued presence of the *Rebbe* and who the *Rebbe* in question was, nor who was in the committee, I became interested in what was going on.

"Truth to tell I was not aware that our Montreal possesses such enthusiastic Chassidim.. Nor had I ever heard of any Radiwitzer *Rebbe*, although I personally know the leading *Rebbeim* of Galicia.

"I was almost overjoyed to learn from the notice that we are equal to others and that we have such here in Montreal, true Chassidim who long for a *Rebbe*. Why not? There are many empty week days, and icy cold. It is a pleasure to know that we have Chassidim who are capable of enthusiasm for a rabbi and wonder at his ability to preside at a table, long may he live. I did not believe that we have in Montreal such truly warm Jews, with sparks of sanctity, who are prepared to set all business aside, to become involved with other matters and to concern themselves with a sacred Jew, a scholar, a rabbi, a *gaon* (leading scholar), a *Rebbe*, etc.

"So I was happy to hear that we have Chassidim in our cold climate who, when they meet a rabbi, do not let go so readily.

"I was also glad to learn that, aside from the famed Chassidic rabbis of Galicia whom I have long known, there is also a *Rebbe* in Radiwitz, and that the saints of the generation are not as few as I might have thought, and things are not as bad, may we not sin.

"I began to inquire about the great guest in our midst, the *Rebbe* who presides over the Galician synagogue on Colonial Avenue, since his name was not given in the notice; we could not speak of his anonymity, a nameless man, God forbid. In response to my question I was told that he is a Radiwitzer type of a *Rebbe*, a "*Pichinendike Rebbele*", sort of a grandson of a Chassid.

"I learned that the same grandson was here and in Quebec, with his *Gabbay* (lay assistant), a year ago, but that he has been missing his Chassidim here and in Quebec, and that he has been blessed by them with blessings that are concrete.

"Why not? A grandson needs to have bread, and it is fine of the Galician countrymen, who in the New World do not forget that there, in their native land there is a *shtetl* where there had once lived a Jew who says that he is a grandson of the former Kopel, the Chassid. (I must

admit I have never heard his name, nor of any book that he had ever written or who had ever mentioned his name, and now they, our Galician natives wish to favour this grandson. Why not?

"Truth to tell, we are all grandchildren, the grandsons of Abraham and Jacob. Still more, we are sons of kings: But the guest has greater merit, for in addition, he is the grandson of Reb Kopel the Chassid.

"So I went on Sabbath to the Galician Synagogue to see how the advertiser, the Radiwitzer conducts the table.

"The synagogue was packed, heads over heads. I saw there, for a change, some intellectual young people, Hebrew teachers who came to hear the new wonder.

"After *Mincheh* (afternoon prayer) the *Rebbe* presided, and I was privileged to sit near him. I saw everything and heard everything.

"I will write about what I saw and heard and of what I think of this, I shall write in the following article."

Report Two (June 18, 1914)

"I watched the grandson at the ceremonial table; I sat close to him, heard his alleged *Torah*, and would give the public my personal impression.

"I do not have his genealogy; is he the so called Radiwitzer *Rebbe*, the grandson of a Reb Pinchas Chassid, or possibly not even this.

"But I became convinced of one point: this grandson is an ignoramus and the teaching which he conveys does not relate a word to a word. Nor is it his own.

"He gesticulates wildly, clumsily, with the gestures of a semi-idiot in his mannerisms of an insincere senseless imitation.

"The true *Rebbeim*, the true good Jews who I have known in my life, were gentle, refined, aristocrats of the spirit, silken gentleman, spiritual, inspired, learned Jews, and their lineage was on their faces.

"For the first time in my life I met a man, a rabbi, who leaves the impression of a beggar. It was the great insult for the Torah when the Radiwitzer *Rebbe* (a title undeserved) spoke with a stuffed nose, sour, hoarse voice, whistling in stringed gymnastics, in disconnected words. But his followers were inspired. The *Rebbe*'s *Gabbay* created the atmosphere with his enthusiasm; he led the singing, sitting at the head of the table, in a silk *shtreimel* (hat), not without spirit, as he commanded over the *Rebbe*. It was not clear that he understood the meaning of the Hebrew words. But for this *Gabbay* at the table, the ceremony would be dead; for the *Rebbe* was ridiculous. It would be appropriate for the *Rebbe* to be the *Gabbay*, the *Rebbe* master, the servant.

"The *Rebbe* conducted the table in his colourful silken *shtreimel*, his foolish expression and eyes not changing, unnatural; the song and Hebrew unaltering, broken; it is doubtful whether

he knew the meaning of the words.

"With some difficulty I suffered the illness of the motions of the grandson as he sang the Sabbath hymns.

"Then with his dirty nails he tore the head of a fish and the Chassidim grabbed the pieces. The *Rebbe* was given whisky, and the close ones were poured portions from the bottles by his own hands. The crowd drank beer, sang, and gazed at him in wonderment.

"It is clear that they wanted to experience the great event and to leave the weekday universe of Canadian life, and the *Gabbay* with his musical temperament -- the grandson notwithstanding -- did excite his crowd.

"The *Rebbe* recited the Great Separation Ceremony but in a caricatured manner, in the style which the anti-Chassidic portray the ceremony, a portrayal which would have elicited scorn in any Galician village.

"When I asked some of the close Chassidim of the Radziwitzer (as they call him) why he appears to be an ignorant man and is not in any sense a true *Rebbe,* they admitted that he is only a grandson of a Chassid, derived from *Rebbeim*. It appears that a grandson suffices, and the crowd collects about him to give him gifts.

"It is very fine to have a grandson, and many draw inspiration from him. Even if he has no testimonials or credentials, he must have something when he chooses to come to Canada, to bless them and be blessed by them.

"When a man takes from the world, he should also give something. But the fact that he is a grandson (and what Jew is not a grandson?) does not justify him travelling with a *gabbay* and accepting gifts. This grandson does not care that our Hebrew Talmud Torah schools are in a terrible material condition, that our public institutions are passing through hard times, that the state of Judaism in Canada is deplorable, that the honour of the Torah has faded. The grandson does not know what is going on in world Jewry, nor does he care to know. He is coming to Canada for the second time to solicit gifts.

"And what does the grandson give that is spiritual to his audience? Certainly not Torah or wisdom, for how can we give what we do not have? What comfort or consolation can such a soul give his brothers?

"But why feed the community with spiritual sustenance and add sorrow to the concerns of a nation? It is enough to imitate. It is enough for a grandson, and we run to meet him.

"I certainly did not want to write of such unhappy matters. In Europe I would be ashamed to use my pen for such painful topics.

"But in Canada it is a topic that the time has enforced, to say that not everyone who claims to be a grandson is a legitimate claimant. Our Jewish youth who regards the scene is shocked to see those dishonoured by the drinking of whisky and beer in the synagogue; they barely keep their eyes open: Here in Canada it is a disgrace to be silent at the phenomenon of "grandsons", who have been coming here and creating the Jewish image of even more ignorant persons than the young *Rebbe*, by presenting wild gesticulations as being teachings of the Torah; this is a degradation of the true religious teaching. It is sacrilegious, to take in the public and take from

them.

I dared to express in our newspaper the impression which the grandson and the scraps of fish from the plate made on me with his sippers of schnapps.

I dared to write openly that we, all Jews, are privileged to be the grandchildren of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, of David and Solomon, but that it does not suffice to be a grandchild to receive such gifts, that he who takes from the world must give to the world. I have done my duty as editor.

"The Jewish press cannot be silent in the face of such public phenomena" (Adler, June 18, 1914)

Within three days on June 21, 1914, an anonymous "Old Chassid" from Quebec City replied to Brainin in the Adler,

"You will excuse me, but you have proven that you have never been a true Chassid, and are not one now either, that you have not even seen true *Rebbeim* or true good Jews conduct their tables of which you boast having witnessed. If you had, you would not have been surprised at seeing the *Rebbe* sit at the head wearing a *shtreimel*, tearing the fish with his hands and Chassidim grabbing the remnants of the fish. For as far as I know -- and I've been at nearly all the ceremonies of the greatest *Rebbeim* in Poland and Galicia where the tables were conducted in the same style as did the Radzwitzer *Rebbe,* and he naturally deserves support.

"In regard to his Torah teaching to which you refer, that there were no connections between words, that surely does not prove that he is an ignoramus, for as you say, his Torah is not his own, and repeating Torah lore literally would not be *Rebbe* teaching. He illustrates this by the tale of Reb Shlomo of Brody.

"...And to drinking in the synagogue in memory of a grandfather this is in the tradition of honouring our ancestors by yearly invoking their memory, even when this is very simple drinking, to elevate their souls."

Another letter in the matter was signed by Chassid Chaim Lehrer of traditional background who agreed that the "grandson" tradition cast no honour on our religion. He agreed that this importation of the less desirable customs from Europe is contrary to the interests of the implantation of Judaism in the New World.

"The gross and ignorant Chassidim here long continued their anger: they nearly decided to excommunicate me in the Galician synagogue. My friends defended me, but I forbade them to begin any conflicts for my sake. Their anonymous letters of insult only arouse my amusement."

But it was not total amusement. The Chassidim sent him a messenger to tell him that they propose to beat him, to kill him and throw his body into the water. His pen may be the weapon of his choice, but their fist is more dangerous, and that this time they propose to use it.

"The Chassid who was threatening me had been imprisoned twice for theft and fraud. He eats non-kosher food, smokes cigarettes in public on Saturdays, but his is a Chassidic *Neshomah Yesharah* (pure soul): he is jealous of the honour of his *Rebbe* and is prepared to kill whoever offends him. When he steals he does it perfectly; when he grabs crumbs from the *Rebbe*'s

table he is a perfect Chassid." (April 22, 1914)

The Brainin visit to the grandson had long repercussions. It was reflected in a Brainin editorial of June 23, 1914, "A Storm in a Glass of Water, or *Les Mystères de Montréal à la Georges Sue*", in which Brainin exposed the stupidities of the degenerate Chassidim.

"Instead of defending the grandson and showing us our errors, some Chassidim of Montreal and Quebec have sent us anonymous letters with the lowest and most degrading comments, incomparable insults, offences and inquisitorial and criminal threats. Our worst alien anti-Semitic opponents would seize upon them to show that we possess our own fanatics who, if they but had the power, would condemn every Jewish author who dares utter a word to the four basic forms of capital punishment.

"But we know that the scriveners of the anonymous letters, and those who raised a scandal in the Austrian synagogue with wild attacks, are ignorant, innocent cowards whose powers are limited to barely signed, illiterate notes, are irresponsible citizens of the lowest class.

"I am confident that in my presence they would not have opened their mouths.

"I request my friends and supporters not to render themselves ridiculous and not take a stand in my defence. Any controversy in connection with trivialities is revolting, and is to be distanced.

"The Jewish community has larger issues."

ON JEWISH IDENTITY

Some of Brainin's editorials in the Adler were long essays on Judaism. His discussions on "Who is a Jew" dealt with the role of Yiddish, Hebrew, religion, morality, and charity in the definition of the Jewish people. (August 1, 1912)

"Rabbi Zalman" was one of Brainin's recollections (Adler, October 2, 1912), a sketch of the other-worldly master of a Yeshiva who dedicated each minute of his life to traditional study of the Talmud, forsaking dress and food and social life and earthly wisdom, accepting the high reality that all mankind may have wisdom, but only Jews love the Torah.

In an editorial "Grandfathers and Grandchildren" (August 26, 1912) he noted the frequency of the progeny of our distinguished Jewish leaders and scholars leaving the faith and the community in order to make great contributions in other human realms. Among these he referred to the scions of Moses Mendelsohn, Marx, Rabbi Israel Salanter, Lombroso, Luzatto, Gratz and Bergson.

Reacting to the failure of the territorialist movement led by Israel Zangwill, Brainin wrote on August 20, 1912,

"We have dreamers, but our people does not dream them; we have battlers, but no army. We let them fall silently, Judaism sleeps silently and drags its chains of spiritual enslavement even with a measure of elegance.

"Zangwill is one of the last great grandchildren of our Maccabees who dreams greatly, who conceives the problem of the entire people in all its breadth and depth."

Two articles by Brainin on "The psychology of American Jews" (July 11 and 12, 1912) constitute a type of fresh sociological self examination. The editor noted details in changes of life style such as the disappearance of beards which were once so significant in the European *shtetl*; where hairs were used as bookmarks in sacred works, where beards marked the faces of the scholars and the pious, and distinguished the rabbis from Christian priests. The editorial of July 11, 1912 was based on the studies of Columbia University's Jewish Professor Boas.

"Whoever is attentive will note the profound radical changes in their inner being. Most evident is the altered visage of the east European immigrant, with the disappearance of his biblical facial glory; the old country Jew used to hide the single hair in a volume of the Talmud; a shred of our ancient culture, a reminder of prophets, a *Mishnaic* genius or a rabbi, which is contrasted by calling a priest, '*Galach*', closely shaven, like a watermelon. This Jew entertains a different self-perception when he loses his beard and earlocks.

This altered self-perception is reflected with the altered names - first and family names, including the loss of nicknames, reminiscent of origins and occupation. These American Jewish names are often Irish or English.

"In my visit to the asylum I had noted that Jewish inmates have changes in identity. It is a pathological extreme, but is an exaggeration caused by self-hypnotism.

"In their original homes family names often indicated family occupations and nicknames reflected memorable incidents in their biographies. Changes of names in the new world reflected erasures of status and assumptions of new identities in new incarnations. Most

immigrants to this continent adopted new occupations of which they had no prior notion. Each began his career from whatever came to hand, often in occupations which were considered beneath him in his original home. Yet each activity and each measure of success or of difficulty stamped his developing character.

"Each trade and occupation which was forced upon the newcomer brought with it attitudes and habits, created new demands, environments and interests. Ancient habits and memories were erased and uprooted.

"In the American world people constantly adopt new activities. There is rapid shifting of classes and there is mobility between cities and even countries -- vast movements from the old world with stable homes, relationships, occupations, classes, moral atmosphere. They must alter their concepts of honour and respect. Most significantly, they must adapt to the new freedoms and equalities and to new riches.

"Learning English is not only the acquisition of another functional language. It accompanies a philosophy of rights and civics."

Brainin reacted strongly and significantly to an article by the revered Zionist thinker Max Nordau in regard to the future of American Jewry as set forth in the Hebrew magazine He'atid.

Nordau foresaw that "the Judaism of North America will be the first community in the world to create a model national Jewish organization, and will educate the Jewish people as a disciplined political power to act in the interests of Judaism in defence against its enemies".

Brainin, himself a European Zionist thinker, had spent years on the American continent. He was fatigued from efforts to create an organizational structure there, and was a little disappointed from his experiences, which had led him to conclusions quite at variance from Nordau's.

"In theory, perceived from his Paris study, the political and economic conditions of American Jewry can, potentially, create a national organization. But when observed and studied at all levels of real life, it is clear that this present Jewry can not, under present conditions, establish a clean, healthy, nation-wide institution which might serve as a model for the Jews in other lands.

"The external conditions and relations are propitious for national creativity, but internal and intimate realities do not encourage great works in the national sense.

"Orthodoxy here, truth to tell, is without a strong spirit; impotent, insincere, powerless, too deeply immersed in business, lacking self-confidence, unrelated to the living conditions of the nation, incapable of development, without truly great men or fighters. Nor is it devoid of true American bluff with all its thirty-two commentaries.

"American Reform Judaism suffers from consumption, anaemia, and lack of vitality, torn from the roots of its people, from the national past, unrelated to the ideal of its future, the nation's hopes. It is an ethical and aesthetic religious form for a group of wealthy people torn from the masses, negative. There is nothing positive or creative, or striving about it.

"Jewish labour has lost its old God, which is the greatest catastrophe. Their material quest for entertainment has swallowed all. Its teachers and leaders are devoted to the usual quotidian, material needs. God, the nation, ethics, aesthetics, Jewish culture are excluded from labour

programs. The spiritual food for Jewish workers consists of romances, fairy tales, entertaining theatre, funny papers.

"The few Jewish idealists who are fit to teach the people, who possess spirituality and knowledge, are excluded from society. While they were overseas they had repute in America. Each of their words was seized in the United States. But when they cross the ocean they are silenced, persecuted, despised.

"Nordau is great. Achad Haam is great, socialist Victor Adler is great, Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk is great -- across the ocean. But if any of them should come here to live with us and seek to exert an influence they will be cheapened here and treated like dirt.

"Zion shall be redeemed by justice. American Jewry will be able to create great deeds for the nation when its spiritual atmosphere will become clean and healthy." (July 29, 1912)

HIS SKETCHES

THE MESSIAH INFANT

Brainin published a nationalist sketch, "The Messiah Infant" (July 10, 11 and 12, 1912), the image of a mother whose husband was killed in the Jewish Self-Defence during a pogrom. She and his infant survived. The mother was convinced that her child would reveal himself as the saviour and redeemer of her people. She became the more assured when the child first uttered the word Mother.

Caught in another pogrom she found shelter, together with others hiding out in an attic from the murderers. The infant was crying incessantly, threatening to betray their hiding place. The mother desperately sought to quiet him, but the child cried louder. The frightened men and women, were afraid, "We will all die because of him."

"I was more and more confused. I tried rocking him, shaking him, kissing him, stroking him, feeding him, caressing him; but he cried louder. The people about me became angrier at both of us, as if the baby and I were teasing them. They seemed to hear someone coming up the ladder. Our crowd panicked, became more loud, crowding each other.

"Suddenly a pair of hands tore the child from my arms, 'Choke the little bastard. Silence him.' But others cried out 'That Jews should do this! That they should say this!' I lunged for the baby, but he cried all the more shrilly as if he was begging with his final powers for his life. He was struggling like a fish in my arms as if to escape me.

"'Kill him. We will all be slaughtered because of him. The gangsters are coming here. They heard him. They are here'

"A thick hand covered his mouth and choked his cries. He nearly suffocated the baby. The baby was nearly dead, and redemption was fated not to come. In despair I bit the hand until I could taste the blood, and he withdrew it.

"Suddenly the ultimate tragedy. The door in the floor opened, and a head appeared with stark yellow hair like rigid nails: He appeared, then a pair of eyes sparking hatred, blue fire. He stopped on the ladder, calling down, 'Here are the damned Jews, the devils. We'll put an end to them, each of them!'

"We all froze in silence. Seeing my child so endangered, I suddenly felt seized by a mysterious strength. Seeing a heavy scale on the floor, I managed to lift it and hit the exposed head of the gangster. He fell down.

"The crowds on the street were becoming wilder and noisier. They were coming closer to our house. In a minute the lower storeys were in flame. In their light which reached us I could see my shining babe. He seemed near death. Our own noise was tumultuous and I was confused. My only thought was how to save my infant from the flames.

"Within a few minutes the self-defence came to save us from the fire. Almost as if by magic, they worked quietly, systematically to rescue us. They lifted me and my baby through the fire across the street, into a basement, past puddles of drying blood, the limbs of men, broken dishes -- a battlefield. Only an old lady in the attic remained; she was not even privileged to have an Israelite burial.

"But in the cellar I ran into another problem. I was frightened to see my breast shrink, with not a drop of milk. I could see my child stirring in my arms. I stole out to find a nurse, but in my search a policeman grabbed my infant. I begged him on my knees to return the baby. He forced me to crawl on the ground before him, and he was satisfied and gave me back my baby. But he came back and began to tease me again, very angry this time, raising the baby high above his head. I wept for his mercy, but he only kicked me and struck me with his sword. He cast the baby from him crying 'Kill the little devil, or he'll grow up and kill us.'

"I picked up my child and fled across the nearby alleyways. I kept hold of the baby and the beneficent angels watched over him -- until I fell unconscious.

"I found myself in the basement of the Self-Defence, together with many wounded people. My baby was not with me. But they told me that he was in the hands of a wet nurse, a Christian lady who was a fighter for liberty.

"If I were to tell you of the sufferings of my baby since it saw the light of day, and then since he was brought to America and then returned to Europe, you would see that this is no ordinary story but a divine intervention and that he will indeed bring redemption."

A JEWISH WIFE

Brainin published his short story "A Jewish Wife", probably in the Yiddish translation of I. Yampolsky, in March, 1913:

"Rachel's husband was a great Talmudic scholar but his wife had no notion of what constituted his greatness. She knew only that he never looked into her face and never spoke to her.

"Four renowned men endowed him with the title of *Gaon*, but she did not know the meaning of the word. All she knew was that he was buried in his tomes day and night. She had not the faintest notion of what he was seeking there and whether he had found it, why these men praised him or why his friends were so jealous of her.

"Rachel knew that she was married to her husband according to the law of Moses and Israel. But she did not know the morals of their law, nor why Moses and Israel imposed such chains upon her hands.

"She was faithful to her husband without any idea of what this faithfulness meant or what else could be. She knew that she was the mother of a three-year-old whom she loved with heart and soul, but she did not know that she was beautiful. When her child became sick, the Christian doctor whom she called whispered it into her ear for the first time. Nor did she know why the doctor whispered this to her. She knew only that she became red from shame, but it had been pleasant to hear it.

"After the child recovered the doctor no longer visited her house. She almost regretted that he was well again and that she therefore had no further need of him; his words were so loving, so new.

"Sometimes she felt unwell and possibly needed his assistance herself and wanted to send for him, but she controlled her melancholy spirit. She was missing his deep, black eyes and pale face and did not know what this yearning meant. She felt guilty for having listened to his compliments and for not having driven him from her house; a criminal and a woman who had sinned. She defended herself with thoughts of her sick child, but deeply she knew that she listened to his words because they had captured her heart and enchanted her soul; she was a fearful sinner for listening to such words from a strange man, a Christian at that.

"She did not look her husband or her parents in the eyes. Her sins seemed etched upon her face.

"Her husband felt nothing, and her parents did not sense any sin in her. Yet she suffered a deep change: a hidden fear and a secret longing; her blood which had always been in repose, seemed to be constantly restless; her heart, ever still like a spring, had become a stormy sea. She was certain that by enchantment she had lost her sanity, she knew not for how long.

"She was sitting quietly but her eyes wandered from side to side. She walked to the window, bent her ear to the door. It opened and the doctor entered. Her body became a question mark.

"'All are well here; what does *Mein Herr* want?'

"'I am not only a doctor, but also a patient. Also a poet in search of beauty which is my god, and the personification of beauty. You are my god and I kneel before you.'

"'Sir, you are truly sick.'

"'Yes, I am ill and you can cure me, a human being whom you can cure, the flower of all flowers. That is why I came in the midst of the thorns. You are not a fading flower; you have not yet bloomed, you have not yet sucked the sweetness of the sun's rays. You do not yet know of love, of life although you are yourself the well of life and of love.'

"'I am a Jewish daughter, a sick woman, ill of soul, a stranger to life. I have a child and have become old even while I am young.'

"'I will restore your youth which you have never enjoyed.'

"'Youth never returns. What was is no longer.'

"'Indeed, what was will never be again. But you can become another, a nobler creature, more loving, more developed and more perfect -- if you so wish.'

"She lowered her eyes, but his eyes were fixed on her and on her pale face, his fingers caressed her hand, 'so gentle, delicate, telling of a secret life not yet lived, not yet satisfied, yearning, secrets which no one has felt.'

"'I have long ago given my hand to a man.'

"'But not your heart. Tell me, you rose of the deepest valley, have you the courage to be mine, to make me yours, so we can fly to the highest peaks of life, love and happiness?'

"'I can never be yours. It cannot be. I was born in the valley and shall die here.'

"'You were born in the vale, but you are the daughter of the high peaks. You are a sublime song, a distant yearning.'

"'These are sublime words, but I am a simple Jewish daughter, the mother of a child and the slave of life. I have no wings, for they have been clipped.'

"'I want nothing from you; only to return to you your beauty, purity, and the nobility which dwells in you unbeknownst. If you do not feel your soul, I sense its depths. I wish to resolve all your riddles.'

A baby cried in the adjoining room. Rachel rose 'I was born a Jewish woman and I will die a Jewish woman. This is my answer to you. My child is crying.'

The doctor walked away. No one knew of his coming or of his going. No one saw her tears."

A TEMPESTUOUS MAN

Brainin's "A Tempestuous Man" (*Sturm Man)* was translated from the Hebrew by "Double *Yud"*, the nom de plume of Isaac Yampolsky, the brilliant columnist of the Adler, in the issue of March 17, 1913.

"He was and is no more. An alien and remarkable phenomenon. What a strange phenomenon he had been, not known to himself or to others: Some considered him a madman, some a genius to be avoided or kept at a distance, feared like the plague. Others loved him and respected him.

"A wandering Jew, he was in constant movement, a man of temper, a trembling national anarchist, a prophet of national rebirth.

"His beginning is a riddle; his end a tragedy, possibly a comedy. He was from Saloniki, proud of his oriental background. He was thought of as a Russian polyglot, speaking European and eastern languages; his Hebrew was that of a Jerusalemite; he spoke French as a Parisian does. In Paris he had studied at the university and was a waiter in a coffee house.

"He had warred both against the principal men of the world and against governments, against the Quai of Paris, and slapped the face of the chief rabbi of Lyon. He attacked the anti-Semites of Berlin. In Switzerland he fought the anarchists, the anti-Zionists, and the police. With whom did he not fight?

"He mailed threats to the dignitaries of the world; to the president of the United States and to the king of Rumania, demanding justice from them for his people. He demanded that Baron de Hirsch place his fortune at the service of the Jewish state, or else he would commit suicide outside his palace. He said that he would assault Dr. Herzl if the founder of Zionism would not adopt the political views of the younger delegates as the Congress program, instead of the current milder line. 'Zion must be redeemed with storm and blood, with smoke and fire.'

"I saw him in infinite sorrow, in constantly changing moods, the eternal burning nationalist Jew, the flaming Zionist. His tales and sermons were a mixture of startling contradiction and alienation.

"He was driven from land to land; from France because of his anarchism, from Vienna on general suspicion, from Berlin because of a sensational scandal, from Switzerland for no given reason. But, wherever he was, he was active.

"In Belgrade he briefly edited a French-language monthly for the Zionist cause entitled Carmel; in Antwerp a pro-Palestine daily for a month; in Geneva he founded a small group to redeem the Holy Land by the sword; he addressed student groups; he would leap on tables with explosive comments.

"Kant he considered a simple *goy*; Goethe he forbade because he was ugly; Graetz and Geiger were ignoramuses."

He would come to Congresses with loads of political leaflets in his pocket. But he had to be silent, never called upon to address the convention as a delegate. Once he tried to speak as a Free Zionist, but Herzl dismissed him. He had never stooped for any man, but he recognized the authority of Herzl whose soft words and extraordinary loving person won him over.

"Once he met Herzl in a Basel lane, and began to draw his revolver, but Herzl screamed and put his hand on his shoulder; at this he quieted down.

"In his heart he entertained negative thoughts about Zionism which he seldom shared with his closest friends.

"Then, at mid-day on a street in some Italian city, he suddenly ended his complex life. He pulled out his revolver and aimed it at his temple; fell never to rise again. A mystery in life and in death.

"His name was Marco Boruch."

A CONVERSATION

A remarkable Brainin sketch, "A Conversation, Cutting it Short, Recorded Word for Word and Letter by Letter", is of interest linguistically as well as stylistically.

During the formative period in the annals of the Yiddish language its writers cherished and caressed its vocabulary and phraseology, particularly of the less educated class. But the simplicity of the language is fictitious; the treasury of its words is rich and even ostentatious. The sentence structure is perfect and complete; repetition is deliberate; the condition of the monologist is typically Jewish; the leisureliness is deliberately *shtetl*, not urban as urbane; clearly time is not money; the locale is European, not American.

By 1910 this sketch form was already rooted; not in the folk but in Yiddish classics, for half a century. Mendele Mocher Seforim had deliberately chosen it, as if there were no other style of Yiddish by 1860. He decided to exploit the heaping wealth of its vocabulary, its Rabelesian manner. Sholom Aleichem chose the monologue as his favoured medium when he was not writing novels and plays. Only Peretz was close to this form of monologue, which allowed him to speak significantly as well. In Brainin's Adler several contributors developed this form of humour for the sketches which they submitted without condescension. Indeed for more than a decade regular features in its issues, probably by B.J. Goldstein and Wolofsky signed with noms de plume, were composed in this traditional style, marked with an incoherence in the entire essay, only typical sentences and some paragraphs having a continuity.

Like much of fiction, the story contains a wealth of social and even economic information that cannot be reliably secured from standard statistical sources.

This monologist documents family and culture relationships in the classic Lithuanian village of Shnipeshock, the intimate *shtetl* home of Quebec immigrant society.

In this case the narrator reveals his cultural condition as a none too successful storekeeper missing a traditional literary almanac such as were common in his native Lithuania.

He is talking to Reuben Brainin, who records the sound of historic strata ranging from Shnipeshock to Montreal and fixes the levels of cultural experience, the layers of the refined *shtetl* sons-in-law and of overworked Quebec peddlers with biographic conscience. We nearly forget that in reality it is Brainin who has a pen in hand and who is talking to the monologist, a subscriber to the Adler. No, Brainin is really addressing the Jewish intelligentsia of the American continent which is overhearing the conversation in which the immigrant from Shnipeshock thinks he is addressing Brainin. This has been the message of Brainin since the day he left Berlin on his mysterious voyage to the New World, a message which was never delivered.

The Montreal monologist admits to Brainin, his journalist-interlocutor, "You will scarcely miss something this Rosh Hashanah. You will scoff at me and make fun of me when I tell you clearly what I miss. But jokes aside, it presses on me, and I hope to feel better when I get it off my heart. You will understand me, for you are connected with the black dots of print and are one of us.

"But why delay matters with riddles and introductions? What I need is an almanac, a calendar. I have a one-cent calendar anyone could buy months before the new year. Merchants were delivering merchandise like this to your home. But I am thinking of a totally other kind of

almanac, a calendar with pictures, with portraits, with stories, a thick almanac, an *Achiassaff* Almanac, a sort of *sefer hashanah* (yearbook) of old times. I don't have to explain it to you; half a word is enough. I need not talk at too great a length.

"Speaking among ourselves, I am a simple Jew. I operate a small store. There, in Shnipeshock, I was a full fledged citizen and, truth to tell, I had some notions on literature. When I was young I used to like to outline a case, to compose a song and other such creations. Don't look at me like this. Here I am indeed nothing, half peddler, half a storekeeper, something of half a man.

"But once I had been supported as a son-in-law in Shnipeshock -- are you also from there perchance? -- and I caught on to the trick of literature. It was no great accomplishment. What do they pay you a week for writing in the paper?

"It is different when you are immersed in it, but now my mind is not in it; we are caught up in this constant whirl of the world, like Feitel at the fair in Ameritchke, hard times and hard living.

"There are the small ones -- five girls growing up, and we need to think of the sum total. Matchmaking is not so American. In Shnipeshock everybody knew who I was; particularly since my daughters are not great catches; one has a hunchback, another limps, the third does not hear well, and so on. (Don't print this in the paper, they are of marriageable age). To add to all my troubles, my own wife has been mortally sick the past few years; neither here nor there. My cup is full, thank the Lord.

"But this is not what I was talking about. I mean, the one bit of pleasure that a Jew like me can have is a book. Comes a festival, a New Year's Day (there are no sabbaths; because of our sins, the stores must remain open. Montreal is not Shnipeshock) -- you want to read, to open a book. As they say, a Jew is not a cow, a peasant. I don't know, but once upon a time they used to say that I was quite something, something of a man of learning. But all this is dismissed in America. Here there is another sort of learning, another knowledge. Maybe I am wrong?

"I am telling you this but I am not praising myself to you. Truth to tell, a dollar is money to me; it is not rolling about on the streets and does not come easily. Until you are no longer a greenhorn and you learn the trick of shovelling gold; it takes a lot of learning.

"I am no real-estatenick. You understand that a dollar is a coin to me. Even in Shnipeshock I was no rich man, but before Rosh Hashanah, a dollar bill was no great shakes. I was the first to buy a thick calendar for a cash dollar. The pleasure I had from it counted in the thousand, maybe ten thousand.

"For a rubble -- half a dollar, you understand -- I had all our writers, from the petty to the great; I mean our own, true, writers; not the American patchers. When they approached a topic, they really approached it from all sides. When they told a story it was not just a tale in the air, but a real story.

"Here in America the writer is not a writer. How can I explain it to you? He is a shop worker. He writes by the yard. That is not writing. It is smearing just to get it over with. I do not wish to insult you, Mr. Editor. An editor does not need to write, only to fill the paper.

"But I do not want to be long. Does not the German say, A man should always speak curtly,

briefly and well. For a single rubble, in Shnipeshock, I could buy a thick calendar, in Hebrew at that, where I could get all sorts of things, such as portraits of our great men. In Europe when they insert a picture, it is always of a great man, not just of anyone. There was reading matter for a whole year, and pictures to look at; and each year brought a newer and thicker calendar with more portraits. When God helped -- and he had to help -- I bought two calendars with literature, in Hebrew and in Yiddish, at a time.

"The book peddler in Shnipeshock considered me a trustworthy customer for such matters; that I would pay for them, if not today, then tomorrow. 'This is good money,' he would say, as he would bring me a gem for my home.

"It is all a matter of habit. In Shnipeshock I used to receive fresh yearbooks for the new year, almanacs such as the people in Warsaw knew how to prepare and sell.

"Suddenly, there are no calendars, not even for medical purposes. It is all extinguished; not only the calendars in the Sacred Tongue, shame to say, there are not even any in simple Yiddish; I mean an almanac with stories, or articles by decent writers, or other good things that a Jew like me enjoys. Suddenly everything has dried out.

"Now I am -- may you never know of my state -- without a hand, nay worse, without skin or life. The entire joy of festivals has disappeared.

"Now, I ask you, may you be well. What can a Jew like me do, who knows a book when he sees one, a storekeeper and a householder, and not a pig, forbid the thought, who likes to read but has nothing to read? The festivals are coming and nothing to look into. Shall I look at the fairy tales and at the junk which they sell by the pound? You understand writing. What should I do? Am I not right?

"The fact is that I do subscribe to a Jewish paper every day. How can anyone live now-a-days without a paper? We need to know what is going on in the world; otherwise it is like being in an abyss.

"But that gazette is sickening. You will have to forgive me, Mr. Editor, for telling you the truth -- we tell it to our own fathers -- those papers that your gang puts out make me dizzy. Today they write that salvation has come to our countries there; they have accorded us equal rights. The next day they withdraw them; they grant them and take them back. Then there are the killings, strikes, riots, plagues, revolutions and who knows what else? A businessman who turns out to be a gambler or a keeper of those houses -- are there no longer any decent Jews that your gang searches these out to impose on me?

"I am only a peddler, a petty storekeeper, but in Shnipeshock they would not trade me for ten sacks of onions. I would want to read a fine thing in fine language with literary craft. Some metaphor or symbol or figure of speech would not hurt, and a proper poem that suddenly grabs you and burns about the heart.

"I know you have no time; it is no small matter to fill up a paper with advertisements, may no evil eye intervene. I also have no time. I have a sense for all this. After all, I am a Jew, even if only a peddler, and I am of our own times. My father-in-law, blessed be his memory, thought I was quite something in our Shnipeshock. But I will not speak of the past. A Jew gives nothing for the past. But even today I want to read a bit of a biography, too. It is warming to hear of great Jewish men, men of attainment. As you observe us here, you gather that we are all real

estate men, peddlers, operators, pressers, etc.

"So I ask you -- you, too, are not one of those three-for-a-penny, may you live long. (You are not living at the expense of my life span) -- where are our writers in America? Where are they hiding, silent? They seem to have forgotten their readers such as me, altogether.

"Surely they must think, at times, of the pleasure and usefulness of others like myself. That surely is why they are writers. I do not have the time to search them out. Nowadays earning a dollar is like splitting the Red Sea.

"But I would tell you only that a paper is not something to throw out or to wrap soap or butter in. My heart does not let me turn Hebrew letters into waste paper. A calendar is a Hebrew book, a Sacred book, decor for a home. Ask the petty writers what they are doing if they cannot put together a calendar for the New Year. Are they professional, skilled men or are they peddlers, storekeepers? What is the matter with them?"

BRAININ AND MONTREAL PHILANTHROPY

An announcement by Brainin, or largely dictated by him, at the end of 1913, is representative of his editorial style and policy during his Montreal years.

It concerns an illustrated lecture on Jewish community work in Montreal and elsewhere in Canada, organized under his chairmanship, on April 1 in the Baron de Hirsch Institute, sponsored by the Zionist B'nai and B'noth Zion.

"Such a project is generally very difficult and often thankless for those who are arranging it. But it is very pleasant for the spectators to observe how much effort and time is devoted and the good accomplished by the few Jews in Canada for their fellow-men. It all demonstrates that American Jews do not live totally for and by the dollar; they have other interests as well.

"After all their efforts the organizers hope that the lecture will not be a one-time affair but will serve the future historian of Canadian Jewry. The committee hopes to gather as much material as possible -- an ambition which is itself a historical service.

"As Lessing put it, 'in the ultimate analysis between truth and the striving for truth, choose the striving.'

"No doubt all classes of our society will attend, for there will be the first presentation of 180 living pictures in natural colour of the institutions and leading personalities connected with them."

The institutions in the demonstration reflected almost the entire Montreal community: the Baron de Hirsch Institute, the YMHA, Mount Sinai Sanatorium, the Zionist Federation, Hebrew Ladies Aid Society, Hebrew Ladies Relief, Palestine Cultural Association, Montefiore Club, Primrose Hockey Club, Maccabean Circle, Montefiore Circle, Hebrew Free Loan Association, Montreal Talmud Torah, Sefarad Talmud Torah, Consumptive Aid, Malbish Arumim, Chevrah Kadisha, Austrian, Russian, Rumanian, Portuguese congregations, Shaar Hashomayim, Temple Emanuel, Hachnossath Orchim and Hebrew Sheltering and Orphans Home, Ladies Sewing Circle, Jewish Endeavour Society, Herzl Dispensary, and Mercaz Ivry.

Young medical student Maxwell Lightstone presided. In later years he became one of the outstanding doctors in the community. Years later he challenged the establishment of the community when they dared intervene in the Jewish school question, since their children were not likely to be affected by the current debate. (Canadian Jewish Archives, new series, no. 3, p. 73)

Brainin's committee included Lyon Cohen, M.S. Leo, L. Goldman, Louis Fitch, Harry Long, M.B. Weiner, Mr. Rubin , B.Z. Speyer and D. Feldman.

Brainin had met the Jewish writer Konrad Bercovici in the coffee houses of the New York East side, and the two literary figures became early close friends in the columns of the Adler, where most of Bercovici's Yiddish reflections of Quebec's landscape and human adventure found refuge together with early Yiddish history. (Canadian Jewish Archives, New Series, no. 43, 1990.)

Konrad Bercovici recorded a visit to one of the early institutions of the immigrant community whose sign proclaimed "*Hachnossath Orchim* ("Walk in Shelter"), Home for the Aged, and

Orphanage."

"The first regrettable aspect of the house is that the three institutions are together. Young children are constantly surrounded by passing wanderers arriving on every ship, by the aged and the poor. These children live in the midst of loneliness; they will be robbed of a sense of independence; they are in the midst of the machinery of charity.

"Experience in Europe as well as in America has shown that the best way of caring for children is to place them in normal homes as foster children; it is even less expensive, and the children are not pauperized.

"The committee is planning to receive 32 children. Beds for them have been purchased, but there is no space for more than 12. The rooms are poorly lit, there is no fresh air, no bathroom, washstands, furniture, lavabos or washing facilities. Where will you put them, gentlemen of the board of administration?

"Nor is there an isolation room for children who might be ill. There is a fire escape from the upper floor but it is wooden. It is made of wood, which burns first. How can you have been so negligent?

"Kitchen arrangements are dark, unsanitary.

"I know you mean no harm; it is only ignorance on your part. But if the children will grow up with weak lungs -- or will not grow up at all -- your explanations will not serve. Orphans require greater care than do children with parents. For the very fact that the parents died young indicates that the children are suspect.

"In the home for the aged an old man was reading a newspaper, a second happened to be at prayer, a third was stretched out on his bed, so distraught that he did not notice us coming in. After a while, he raised his head towards us and sank back in his reflections.

"Three women sat out of doors peeling potatoes. One of them, five years in Montreal, told me that they had been wealthy. Another one, came from Germany three years ago.

"As I was leaving I looked at the sign again -- Orphans-Wanderers-Aged. Do they necessarily follow? (Sept. 20, 1912.)

The unexpected report on the pogroms in Saloniki came like thunder out of a blue sky.

"Brainin decided this is no time for weeping. Writing will not alter the conditions of our kin. We must raise $1,000 and send it to the unfortunate. Within a few minutes we raised $80 in the office of the Adler, from the lower and the several middle class people. When Brainin was about to thank one of the contributors, the man responded, "Thank you for the opportunity to do my duty".

"The Baron de Hirsch Institute was conducting its annual elections and Brainin asked to speak; he urged immediate aid for the victims. As I listened I was certain that the thousand dollars would be raised there and then. All the wealthy citizens of the community were there. The sum total was $180, and this largely because of the energy of the former president Lyon Cohen.

"From there we went to the Young Men's Zionist Literary Society where Brainin was to deliver a scholarly address. Instead he made his appeal. Within a few minutes they collected $30.

"We left for the Russian-Polish Sick Benefit Society. Wolofsky understood the situation. Brainin's address resounded like the funeral march of Chopin on the demise of a nation, a march which would revive it and teach it the art of arms when necessary. Those present immediately contributed $50.

"We arrived at the Hebrew Sick Benefit Society after their meeting, but their officers had done our work for us. They pledged $50 and Brainin had but to thank them.

"We stopped in at the King George Society. Brainin sounded as an echo of the martyrs, and those who had remained to hear him raised over $20 within minutes. In the meantime the society delivered another $25 to the Adler for the cause.

"We arrived at the Montreal Hebrew Association after their meeting; only four members had remained, but the chairman took it upon himself to pledge $10 in the meantime. We came too late also to the assembly of the Shoemakers Protective Society. When the last three members at the door had emptied their pockets, the contribution was $2.25.

"We went home after midnight tired and broken. In the morning we received an envelope with $9. The pulse was beating hard."

Both Brainin and Bercovici were passionate students of the Yiddish folksong and wrote series of studies on this aspect of Jewish culture.

Brainin wrote a series of articles on "Jewish Folksongs", particularly on love songs in the European s*htetlach*, in July 1912.

Konrad Bercovici began to write for the Adler when Brainin assumed its editorship. One of his early contributions dealt with folksongs and Jewish street songs (Aug. 1, 1912). The refined critic was deeply shocked at the vulgarity and stupidity of Yiddish folksongs that flowered with the younger generations of Jewish workers.

Brainin frequently noted that life was bitter in the European Jewish environment; the populace was suppressed, overstressed, airless, without cheer or flowers. It was not the atmosphere for love, idealism, admiration or the Song of Songs.

But these very characteristics are the realistic subjects of much of Yiddish song, as is the determination to retain within Jewish civilization the decencies, the decorum, the religion of the Jewish tradition.

RADICAL IDEOLOGIES

Simon Belkin, one of the great leaders of Canadian Jewry during this period, has described the complex setting of the Montreal which Brainin made his home. "The period during which Brainin lived in Montreal has left a unique imprint upon Jewish communal life in the whole of Canada".

The Yiddish-speaking immigrants of Montreal during Brainin's time were not Hebraists. Many of them were not Zionists; they were proletarian, alien to bourgeois refinement, to religious values, subscribing to the broad gamut of radical ideologies.

Although as a class they succumbed to Brainin's charm and respected him, he despised them without end.

The bridge between them was the Poale Zion whose ideology was based on a compromise between Yiddish and Hebrew, Zionism and socialism. It was a historically constructive stance in which Brainin played the happiest part, but even here he was cheerless.

Brainin noted in his diary, "I am convinced that our 'radicals' in America and in Canada are totally torn from our people. They are a sect all by themselves with no bond between them and our national body. Their vast majority (except for a few fortunate exceptions) are totally ignorant and cannot entertain a single thought. I have known this before, but it had come to me from the air; I had only had a general idea about this. But my daily experiences are confirming how deeply, how far their wildness, stubbornness and crudity reach.

"The unity of party program and system fill their heads and hearts. They hate all thoughts or learning; they hate scholars, refined people and all who speak another language; they know no courtesy or respect, have no sacred soil, and always choose corrupt people as their leaders; whoever does not offend Judaism is suspect in their eyes!

"They are a dead limb on the body of our nation; they cannot be revived or taught courtesy. Sincerely observant Jews sacrifice for the sanctity of the Sabbath, but these radicals sacrifice and are ready to perform ugly deeds in order to desecrate the Sabbath, and consider it great and wondrous to offend Jewish festivals.

"Until I came to America I thought of radicals as shoemakers, tailors, carpenters, peddlers and other lower class persons to whom I paid no attention and with whom I had had no contact.

One phase of Brainin's life which engaged him gravely was the frequency of strikes in the Jewish industries.

Soon after his arrival in Montreal in the summer of 1912, his life was complicated by a general strike.

On Sept. 8, 1913 a serious strike broke out in the plant of H. Vineberg when 350 Jewish workers walked out.

The shop was one of the best known in the Montreal industry and is on record as one of the most difficult for the workers and their unions to work in. The recollections of H. Noveck and H.M. Caiserman document this relationship.

Brainin's policy was clear. He was openly supportive of the workers and opened his pages to reports of both sides, but insisted on decent language and clean methods of labour militancy. Personally he sought to maintain contact with employers and strikers and was willing to act as neutral negotiator. Generally the community trusted his fairness, although he was aware that a group in the labour community was actively maligning him as anti-striker.

In the event it was complicated by the presence in the city of Leon Chazanovitch who waged a bitter campaign against Brainin even as he was leading the struggle against the manufacturers. (Canadian Jewish Archives, number 42)

The bitter controversy between Leon Chazanovitch and Brainin in 1912 had little substantial value other than as a taunting reflection of a clash of personalities. Chazanovitch, the editor of the Folkszeitung, described Brainin in terms which were somewhat revealing. He wrote:

"Brainin is too cowardly to fight face to face. He uses a lowly creature -- or more correctly he permits himself to be misused by a lowly creature. Brainin edits the Adler and Wolofsky, the manager, edits Brainin. The dirty politician twists the literary man of weak character about his finger. The elephant is silent and the spider talks; the great elephant hides behind the back of the tiny spider."

The Jewish community suffered greatly from the unhealthy relations between its workers and its employers -- aggravated by the complex Jewish-Christian relations.

So a minor tailor boss, H. Bernstein of the Queen's Cloak and Skirt, where a strike was going on for several weeks, told the general press that M. Jacobs, the business agent of the Cloak Makers union, demanded that Bernstein dismiss his Christian workers; the Jewish workers, he told the press, do not want to work with non-Jews. The union, of course, denied the accusation. (Adler, Dec. 3, 1913)

Before the new year Brainin invited the strike leaders to the Adler office to explain the strike situation to him. A few days later he asked Mr. Vineberg, an important pioneer community leader, a Talmudist, a man of learning, for a discussion which lasted nearly five hours. It was a vigorous exchange.

Vineberg was so vehement against the union leaders that Brainin considered it judicious not to publish his rather provocative statement. His conclusion was that the case should be arbitrated. Vineberg did not consent because he did not accept the very fact of a strike. (Jan. 5, 1914).

Within several days, by January 7, agreement was reached with Vineberg about arbitrating the dispute and both parties entrusted the general problem to Brainin. Two arbitrators were named and two more were to be named on the 9th. Brainin named several from among whom these arbitrators were to be selected. Brainin was named chairman of the committee of five arbitrators. The group was expected to begin its work on January 8.

Nevertheless there was disquiet in the worker's circles and thousands gathered outside the Vineberg shop at the corner of Main and Duluth Streets, blocking traffic.

The news that the strike was near a settlement evoked great joy. Since morning hundreds crowded outside the Adler building reading the bulletins and waiting for the paper to appear from the press. "The newsboys did good business". (January 8)

The settlement did not come easily. On January 10 Brainin found it necessary to convene a mass meeting of the community in the Prince Arthur Hall to report on the current situation of the strike at which each of the arbitrators would tell of their lengthy discussions in their efforts to reach an understanding, and the relations between them and Vineberg.

After three difficult days the deliberations came to a conclusion at a seven-hour session in the St. Regis Hotel on January 12 in the presence of Brainin, Rabbi Nathan Gordon, Carl Rosenberg, L. Epstein and M.B. Eliosoph. The arbitrators concluded that the strike had come about as a result of a misunderstanding on all sides. If there had been arbitration machinery in place at the time, there need not have been a conflict in the first place, they found.

A mass meeting of tailoring workers with the arbitration committee took place on January 13:

The wage scale in effect in the factory would remain unchanged; there would be no discrimination against unionized workers; all workers would return to their places; previous workers who remained at work will remain on their jobs; those who had been engaged during the strike will be dismissed; the system of workers employed at weekly salaries and those at piece work will continue. (Adler, Jan. 13, 1914)

A week later Brainin was at the heart of more trouble outside the Vineberg factory.

"Monday evening I witnessed a fearful scene, so terrible that I have lost my rest ever since. The picture does not fade from my eyes. I cannot be silent. The Jewish community must take measures that this shall never be repeated.

"I was in my office at six in the evening when the telephone began ringing to tell me that a pogrom of Kishineff style was going on outside Vineberg's.

"I proceeded at once with J.B. Miller to the scene of the violence. As I got off the sleigh I was roughly seized by three policemen as if I were a condemned criminal. Mr. Miller informed the police sergeant, who happened to be his friend, that I was editor of the Adler, and they released me.

"It was clear that the strikers conducted themselves peacefully from beginning to end; no outcries, no provocation, no unrest from their side. But the police were brutal to all peaceable passers-by opposite the Vineberg shop, using fists and clubs, beating out wildly at the people passing. Jewish men and women were struck and had bones broken without the slightest provocation. I had never witnessed such wild police brutality in my life.

"There are labour demonstrations in the large centres of Europe; as long as workers and strikers are peaceful, the police stay in hidden corners and do not touch anyone with a finger. Even in Germany, where the police are strict and brutal, they never acted against peaceful demonstrations, even when hundreds of thousands marched on the streets.

"Only in Russia, during the revolutions, or in Kishineff was anything like this ever seen.

"Who is responsible for this police violence? Certainly not the workers and the citizens who were quietly marching on the street or returning home from work.

"But whoever ordered the attack on peaceful citizens with clubs like wild Indians, the police had no right to carry out such an order.

"Certainly the aldermen have a heavy duty to ascertain who were the guilty and to prevent such brutality in the future. Otherwise the citizens are not secure in their lives, and the Jews who left Russia because they could no longer tolerate inhuman police brutality will have to taste Kishineff in free Canada.

"Thank God law and justice reign in this country. We must demand security for our Jewish citizens. We must respond to the wildness of the police against peaceful Jewish citizens."

For a profound prophet who would shape the future of the Jewish people on the eve of the holocaust, now a Yiddish editor in the new world, Brainin found himself dealing with frustrating questions for which he could never formulate even the terms of the issues. He could only cry out in helplessness.

Brainin's self-perception as editor of the Adler was shared by some of his admirers and rejected by others. M.Z.R. Frank, who knew him well, saw clearly that "this Adler-Hadror, New York-Montreal (1913-17) period was the beginning of his decline not only in fate and fame but also in terms of his inner powers which no longer developed; they not only failed to keep their promise but ceased promising. But during those years when he was in his fifties and Kaufman in his twenties his crown was not lessened in the view of the populace.

"Many of us saw him as in a temporary crisis which he will overcome and will magnify salvation." (M.Z.R. Frank)

In Brainin's diary of this time, he writes: "I was distant from them in spirit and in space. I knew their true worth: impertinent, narrow, crude, immoral, unpleasant. Distant as I was from them, my judgement of them was true.

"But in Montreal I came in direct contact with them. They came to me on various matters, and during recent months I work with them in a public institution. I have been recognizing them more closely; I know their family life, their dealing with each other, their conversations, discussions, their community work and their views of life and of the world.

"During my years in Montreal I succumbed to stupidity and I saw the gathering of the crude and cheap radicals as idealists, as the salt of the nation, as men of heart. But I knew that they were extremist fanatics, raw men without a sense for beauty.

"The radicals who worked with me for the Jewish Public Library were among the best, the choicest, men of spirituality, moral and cultured. Most of them were Poale Zion and Zionist nationalists. In spite of all this they were narrow and limited in their judgements and their feelings. They truly hated Judaism and their love of Zion was false. They were men of scandal. It was impossible to debate with them.

"If their party and their machinery ordered them to act in a certain manner or to carry out a certain command, there was no way of instructing them otherwise. Anyone suggesting otherwise was a bourgeois, and it was necessary to destroy him.

"Were Moses to rise from his grave he would be seen as some Jew who had written nonsense and would be dismissed with a cheap and vulgar expression.

"I know all this, but I truly believed that they shared a moral sense of justice.

"I looked upon them with a dreamer's eyes and saw what was not there. I believed that they could be saved, that they could be developed spiritually; that they could become the permanent foundation of the Hebrew people. I saw that the worst of them were worms, but not snakes.

"Only one thought obsesses me: to be rescued from Montreal, from Yiddish journalism, from petty communal work. This thought is trapped like a bird in a narrow cage. I am caught in the Yiddish garbage heaps and long for the temple of my Hebrew queen whom I deserted. I was not born to be a communal worker, and to be with crude people. But I fell into the stream and I am forced into the routine of my work as an editor and writer in Yiddish....

"Two selves are struggling within me. The stronger one whispers: flee from poor Canada, poor in its Jews, poor in knowledge, and devoid of culture. Even if you were the head of all Canadian Jews, you would not be happy; for you are not easily satisfied with little. Go to New York where a great centre will open for you. In New York you can set up a Hebrew platform for the entire world; you can do great things for the Jewish people. In Canada you will diminish; your image will become small and your gold coin will be exchanged for copper pennies.

"My second self tells me: enough of wandering, enough of trying your future in New York again, the city replete with jealous politicians, cheap men of the fist, impertinent, ignorant even. Stay in Montreal; your home is here and your sons are here; you cannot live without them.

"Here in Montreal you can build a basis and a fortress for your material life. If you had a newspaper of your own and a Hebrew weekly you could influence the entire world." (Works, Oct. 3, and 8, 1914).

NEW JEWISH INSTITUTIONS

"Soon after his arrival, Brainin took the initiative in Jewish affairs. He called conferences that were to deal with Jewish communal matters generally, and primarily with Jewish education. It was through his efforts that the *Mercaz Hamorim* (the Hebrew Teachers' Circle) was organized. This had its effect upon the improvement of Jewish education, first in Montreal and subsequently throughout Canada. Another important organization formed owing to Brainin's initiative was the *Merkaz Ivri* (the Hebrew Centre) in Montreal, whose object was to spread the knowledge of Hebrew, to give it the status of a living language. This Hebrew Centre also organized a series of Hebrew public lectures with Brainin as the principal speaker. It was, too, the first to arrange Hebrew concerts for Montreal Jews. Hundreds of people were stimulated intellectually at these gatherings and many still remember the pleasant associations of those days.

"The crowning work in the educational field of that period was, however, the formation of a Jewish Public Library. In that, too, Brainin's efforts were evident. Many attempts had been made previously to establish a Jewish library in Montreal. They had all ended in failure. It is to Brainin's credit that he succeeded in bringing together a variety of groups interested in Jewish letters and in Jewish thought and finally made the present Jewish Public Library -- a much admired institution, a reality in Canada's largest Jewish community. ("When Brainin was a Montrealer" in Canadian Jewish Year Book, 1940-41, pp.134-36)

Brainin's uneasy transition from refined Hebraist aesthete to Yiddish populist militant was reflected in his role in the founding of the Jewish Public Library.

One winter, when the library organized its first tag day, Brainin spent many hours in encouraging the volunteer workers. The Library was not only a place where books were collected and read. Before long it had become a centre of general educational activity. Public lectures in Yiddish were organized. Important writers, among them Sholom Aleichem, were invited to lecture under its sponsorship. Later, a People's University was established in its rooms. More, the example set by Montreal was emulated by other Jewish communities in Canada and other libraries were opened in the larger centres.

He had been called by the Zionists and the Poale Zion to breathe life into their cultural program. Among the other groups who joined him in 1912 were Branches 151 and 204 of the Workmen's circle. Significantly, one of the first acts of the new library was to purchase a number of ancient Hebrew books for its collections to establish symbolically that the Montreal institution was more than a reading room and popular circulation centre.

Brainin's connection with the library was close as early as May 12, 1912 when he appeared at its concert and literary evening at the Coronation Hall together with L. Chazanovitch and S. Schneour.

Early in January 1913, he addressed a poorly attended conference, but a fortnight later he appealed for the year-old institution. "It owes its existence to a very few devoted workers who are without means for continuing it. There are few books; the rooms are small, without adequate lighting... It is not a partisan cause but the responsibility of all groups." (Adler, January 28, 1913)

After a long crisis in 1913 during which the library was closed for months, Brainin convened another conference on February 22, 1914. Within several months the Jewish library was

reopened to a long career as glorious as any in Canadian institutional history.

Yehudah Kaufman insisted that the Jewish People's Library develop into a people's university, with Brainin at its head. In March 1914 the Kaufman plan came close to realization.

Brainin presided over the opening of the Jewish Library on May 15, 1914 jointly with Kaufman. Yampolsky read Brainin's essay, "We Need Good Fortune", and musician J. Rosmarin participated.

The Adler celebrated the opening of the Jewish Public Library on June 10, 1914, "After utmost efforts, in a seventeen room home, with the appropriate newest Jewish books and far-flung Yiddish periodicals.

"For a year we have been agitating for help in vain, for tables, chairs, book cases for our People's University for the young people that attend our institution. Our program is to assemble all of Hebrew literature - Bible, Talmud, *Halacha* (Jewish law), Jewish science, morality, Chassidism, Yiddish literature and translation -- the fruit of Jewish genius. The library does not pursue particular political trends, but remains open to all classes and to satisfy the mostly varied needs of the community. A considerable number of services are now available; young scholars can now pursue Jewish studies in a comfortable open atmosphere created by and for our people. We have prevented some young immigrants from falling into missionary traps. Others have avoided the undesirable vulgar leisure centres, the haunts of the ignorant.

"Our collaborators have proven the need of a Jewish library to retain our élite."

Mendel Frankel responded to Brainin June 14, to explain the lack of response to the library appeal. "Recently a large section of the intellectual youth in the community has been suffering from long unemployment and is not able to contribute financially to realize your plan. To establish two necessary institutions simultaneously - the library and the people's university - is a strain upon our educated society. I support the opening concert; I will help all I can and propose my person as an example."

Early in 1913 Brainin initiated a movement for a Jewish Immigrant Aid Society in Canada, inspired in part by the New York *Hachnossath Orchim* Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society.

"The future of the Jewish people depends upon the proper resolution of this problem. Jews must be rescued from the lands where they are now endangered, where their economic status is worsening daily and where they are being deprived and robbed of their human rights. They must be resettled where they can be assured of equal rights and of economic possibilities and where Judaism can have a future", he wrote. (February 2, 1913)

Brainin initiated one of the basic steps in the Montreal community in 1914 which led within twenty years to the establishment of the Jewish General Hospital.

"We must have a Sick Visiting Society in Montreal" is the title of an editorial appeal in the Adler of June 18, 1914 for a public meeting on Sunday morning, June 21.

"On various occasions we have published letters about the humanitarian service such as exists in other communities. From time to time we have visits from long time residents, or from

newcomers who have lain in local hospitals without visitors to say a friendly word.

"This is all the more sad about women who know no English, have no relatives or acquaintances. When they suddenly find themselves hospitalized and they need to rely on their Christian neighbours in the absence of Jewish doctors; then loneliness is the more painful.

"Christian patients are visited by their clergy who bring the consolation of their faith but rabbis do not visit the Jewish sick, and pious Jews happen to pass away in hospitals without final rites, without seeing a Jewish face or hearing a fraternal word. Yesterday our paper reported on the front page on a tailor, Harry Knooks, who told us of a newcomer in the General Hospital who, following a serious operation, had no relatives or friends to visit him. He wept tears as he spoke to a worker who had been at his side on the job that his loneliness was harder than his isolation.

"Is it possible that this will not touch our readers? Have fraternal feelings ceased from the Jewish community, that our Jews are no longer merciful sons of merciful parents? Our Talmud notes that a Jew with no sense of mercy is not derived from Abraham.

"I wish to believe that Montreal Jews are no different from Jews in other countries; Jews continue to observe the commandment of visiting the sick, not to speak of other humanistic acts. We must begin".

The editorial sponsorship by Brainin of the Sick Visiting Society took concrete form on June 21 at a meeting at the Adler when Rabbi Cohen was named first president.

Brainin dealt with "Jewish Poverty in Montreal" (Feb. 21, 1913). From his editorial desk he came to observe much grave penury in the immigrant community, among Jews psychologically unable to apply for charity or persons of old families with traditions of dignity and, often, of generous philanthropy.

"The editorial offices of the Adler are often visited by unfortunates with hidden problems and complications in their lives, in need of help, advice, recommendations, in need of discreet listeners and moral support. Jewish poverty is often modest, abashed, shedding secret tears.

"In some cases they share their last cents with canvassers for charity, their bread with neighbours who are hungry. In their society we still find cases of generosity, compassion, character, refinement and idealism.

"Probably more than elsewhere, Montreal Jews attempt to be helpful. Noble women devote energy to help the needy through the Hebrew Consumptive Aid Society, the Hachnossath Orchim, the Malbish Arumim, The Hebrew Ladies Aid Societies.

The Ladies' Hebrew Council is attempting to establish a day nursery for children whose mothers are hospitalized.

"The institutions cannot alleviate all the ills of the poor. They cannot render them independent and autonomous of assistance. Only the least reserved of the poor, and the most unfortunate apply to the Baron de Hirsch Institute, especially since there is a certain prejudice in the community, an antipathy against this institution.

"All available resources in Montreal Jewry are also focused on the caritarian need to give

material aid and have therefore neglected other community requirements such as the Jewish Public Library, Talmud Torahs and the schools in Mile End and in Amherst Park".

Brainin took the initiative of calling upon Judge Choquette of the superior court, founder of the juvenile court at the end of the century, in regard to Jewish children who had appeared before him (Feb. 26, 1913).

The judge stated that Jewish delinquents are no more or less numerous than others, but the nature of their delinquency is different from the French Canadian or English children. They are generally more skilful and efficient. They commit their crimes with greater intelligence. Jewish delinquents generally do not attend schools or Talmud Torahs; they are idle street children, children of immigrant parents from Russia, Rumania and Galicia who have assimilated with the street culture here and speak English well.

In his view the Jewish children are not corrupt by nature. They are ignorant, living in a bad environment who never heard a kindly word from parents, teachers or preachers.

In some cases parents are directly responsible for the crimes of their children. Some force their children to bring money home and, if these children cannot earn such money, they steal.

They generally turn in stolen moneys and articles to their parents who do not care about the source of these funds.

The children are brought before the judges, largely on charges of stealing from jewellery stores or picking pockets, from Jews or Christians; they are international.

They are also induced to crime to provide them with cigarettes and with tickets to movies.

If the children cannot usefully be returned to the care of their parents, they are placed on farm schools which often influence the children for good.

When this is observed in the reform schools, the children are returned to their homes before the conclusion of the terms of sentence.

CHILDREN ON STRIKE

One of Brainin's idealistic causes was brought to the attention of his readers, "a daughter of the Jewish people, six years from Russia, at first a resident of Winnipeg and since then a factory worker in Montreal.

"In Russia I was a devoted revolutionary, with my whole heart and soul, nourishing the dream of liberty, living for the salvation of the Russian nation. But we sacrificed even more for the Jewish nation. Many of my colleagues also believed that they would be liberated together with the fall of tyranny and slavery; the Jews, too, will develop culturally. It was a beautiful time of sacred hopes, of sacred ideals, of enthusiastic battle. There I felt I was searching for the Jewess and the human being (in myself) with full awareness.

"That happy time is past. Fate, need, circumstance has cast me on to the shores of Canada, into a Montreal shop. What a change it has been for me in the seven years I have been in cold Canada! My identity has died within me. I am no longer the fine Jewess and the revolutionary fighter I had been. Difficult, sad, boring shop work and the petty concerns of shop life are mine. The Jewish woman that I have become in Canada finds no spiritual nourishment, and when the Jewess in our women becomes weakened, the human being in us becomes colourless and powerless.

"I seem to remember that you once wrote, "The new Judaism is waiting for the new Jew and, above all, for the new Jewess." But where will she come from? Who cares for the Jewish daughters? Who lectures to us specifically? Which of the Jewish literary spokesmen address themselves to us and seek to strengthen our Jewish awareness?

Brainin responded with an understanding of the plight of the cultured woman, torn from her natural environment and from living concerns. To become a useful member of society she must discover herself and her confidence in her own faith in progress and in her own potentialities. In his view the women require and deserve the support of the entire society, he wrote. (Dec. 27, 1912)

Brainin's editorials were often in series of programs and of personal statements, repetitive reminders that his attitudes and his dissatisfaction were founded on continuing conditions in Jewry and in society.

The Jewish pupils in the Aberdeen School on St. Denis Street struck after a sixth grade teacher had commented in class that Jews were dirty. She said that when she first came to the school it had been very clean, but since the Jewish children arrived the school had become dirty. She is also reported to have said that she would report that to the committee.

The children met and decided to call a general strike unless the teacher apologized.

The young militant children for Jewish dignity were led by Harry Singer, Frank Sherman, Joe Orenstein, Moses Skibelsky and Moses Margolis.

The strikers marched through the streets to the offices of the Adler where a spokesman for the newspaper promised them all support. They then marched to the Baron de Hirsch Institute. A journalist from Adler called on the school principal, but the latter refused to issue a statement, referring the matter to the Board of Education.

The following day the children returned to school in the morning to pick up their text books and scribblers, but the teacher locked the door to them. The pupils sent younger children to each class with the call for a general strike. Soon 500 responded and some were named for picketing duty.

The legislative Committee of the Institute met in the office of S.W. Jacobs. Rabbi H. Abramowitz and Mr. Jacobs met with the principal. The teacher expressed her regret for having made inappropriate comments which were misunderstood by the children. The Jewish visitors requested that the children be accepted by the school and that the teacher be transferred to another school (Adler, March 2, 1913). The matter was left in the hands of the board of education. The Legislative Committee of the Baron de Hirsch Institute recommended that the children return to school while the Jewish committee negotiated with the commissioners.

The strikers declared their consent to their elders' proposal (Adler, March 2, 1913).

"All this lies hidden in the children' strike and more. The tender soul of the Jewish child would not dare revolt for so minor a matter if the threads of national rebirth were not weaving in their hearts. In ancient time the gates of education were locked to Jews and children were the first to feel exile. When they first came into the world, they were locked into the *cheder* where they neither knew nor felt the taste of *Galuth* (the Diaspora).

"But since schools were opened to Jews, the Jewish child began to feel the taste of *Galuth*. Every skulking teacher or professor had the right to stifle and insult the soul of a Jewish child. He always protested, but his exilic parents always suppressed all that is Jewish in the child to the point of denial of his self.

"But a new air has entered the Jewish atmosphere. Self denial has given place to proud self assertion. The Diaspora type is beginning to disappear as he comes to feel equal. This has come into being in our best sons. The select few have come to feel the rottenness that has entered the Jewish soul and have begun to create a new culture, a national rebirth; we hear its echoes in the distant corners of America; we find new books on the market, Hebrew and Yiddish journals.

"If we find in Montreal a miniature Jewish world of 600 small soldiers marching hand in hand in defence of Jewish honour, let no one believe that this stems from American liberty. It derives from the literary evenings in Jewish institutions, of Jewish presentations which young people hear and absorb.

"The act of these children is an honour unto us. Many Christians will learn the new Jewish sense of honour". (March 4, 1913)

Brainin wrote on March 9, 1913, "the incident in the School which evoked a pupil strike after a teacher offended the Jewish people is a major contribution to Jewish renaissance.

"Christian society let it pass as a minor event; the Jewish public took it as child's play. Some Jews considered it unfortunate. Why arouse the geese? But the inquiring eye will see that there is much to learn in the case.

"This without entering into the justice of the case or whether children should resort to strikes. The first to protest should be the parents, and it is the parents who should demand rights and justice for them. But what interests me is that the children did not seek justice for themselves;

it was their national sensibility that was offended and that provoked their little fists against their highest government (for to children their teachers and schools are the highest government).

"We need to think much about this first sprouting of a generation which is new in our exile history, a free generation which is discarding the chains of Diaspora, which no longer bends its head, no longer begs for justice but takes what is not accorded it freely."

BRAININ ON STRIKE - THE ADLER

In February, 1915 a minor development within the Adler burgeoned into far wider communal dimensions and influenced many phases of Montreal Jewry for more than a decade.

The staff at the newspaper accumulated a series of dissatisfactions with the publisher which culminated in a strike. Circular no. 3 issued by the strikers, signed by Isaac Yampolsky, I. Stein and A.M. Mandelbaum, lists the workers demands': a) payment of salaries due for the past 3 to 6 weeks, b) an apology from the manager for libellous statements, and c) adherence to contracts in force on February 28, 1915. The circular named Abraham Roback ("Itan") and M. Shmuelson ("Isaac") as scabs."

H.M. Caiserman attempted to arbitrate the dispute, "but the management had failed to continue these proceedings."

H.M. Caiserman, who studied the background of the strike, issued a leaflet on the conflict and on "the shameful scabs.

"When a foreman insults one of the workers and the others declare a strike, even without consulting their union, such an undisciplined strike remains nevertheless valid.

"Wolofsky had spoken discourteously of Brainin many times, long before there was any talk of a strike.

"Wages have not been paid at the Adler for weeks. Wolofsky admitted that he is three to six weeks behind in such payments. Brainin and other workers have two contracts which were not observed.

"Among the strike-breakers: A. Roback, who is notorious for scabbing in any strike.

"Konrad Bercovici, an artist in all existing and non-existing fields, is known as having lost the books in his possession before they were to be audited.

"Mr. Sack was among the strikers for two weeks.

"Mr. Shmuelson, a most talented author whom I have loved as my own life for five years, has chosen not to strike now to settle accounts with the present strikers. It is simply heart-breaking to see a man of such talent and energy sinking into the Wolofsky-Adler strife."

For whatever reason, Brainin found himself on the workers' side and joined their ranks.

B.J. Goldstein wrote from Winnipeg "Brainin, is a prince of the spirit, naive in soul, distant from the material. When I heard that he had become a Canadian citizen, I felt that Canadian Jewry ought to celebrate the festive event, for how many like Reuben Brainin are there in the market place?

"When I heard that he joined a strike, I was dumbfounded, for what is a prince doing in a saloon?" (Der Veg)

The strong willed Wolofsky declared a harsh war against Brainin and the entire community

was aflame.

In the conflict with Wolofsky, Brainin was accused of dishonest management of community funds, such as those of the Hebrew Centre (*Merkaz Ivry*) of which he was president.

Montreal Jewish society split down the centre of all its activities, especially since Wolofsky did not hesitate to establish alliances outside the immigrant society. Brainin was doomed in Montreal in spite of the small army of his admirers and valuable collaborators.

Benjamin Weiner, chairman of the executive committees, protested vigorously against these false and libellous statements and against the involvement of S. Talpis in these machinations. Weiner was for many years a leading figure in Montreal education, Zionist and Hebrew affairs and an intimate friend of Rabbi J.L. Zlotnick (Jewish Public Library, Brainin Archives).

Brainin broke with Wolofsky and was able to mobilize funds to establish his own Yiddish daily Der Veg, but his perpetual dream was about a Hebrew weekly, Haderech. Wolofsky became more violent and desperate in his virulence against Brainin when Brainin announced his intentions to issue a competing daily Yiddish newspaper.. Even Hebraists and loyalists were doubtful of its success, after Brainin's failure with Hadror in New York. Der Veg did not endure and Haderech never appeared.

Wolofsky was aware of the real threat to his business and to his cherished cause. In fact, the Adler did not recover from the Brainin crisis for a decade.

Wolofsky did not keep his resentment of Brainin a secret and it is not surprising that when Caiserman investigated labour relations in the Adler he found that the publisher had long been speaking of Brainin with little courtesy.

The Montreal Star reported that R. Brainin, former editor of the Adler, is leaving for New York in connection with a Yiddish newspaper which he is about to establish. Brainin is about to become president of the newly founded Alliance of Canadian Jews and will represent the dominion community at the peace conference after the war.

"Brainin intends to transform the conference of the Jewish National Workers Alliance into a Peoples' Alliance and to convene the planned conference of Canadian Jews, being vice-president of the Zionist federation".

The opponents of Brainin's Folks Farband either did not see the need of a separate fundraising effort for overseas relief or - the Adler was frank in saying so - saw the Folks Farband as only an instrument to destroy Wolofsky's paper.

The Zionist Council became aware that circulars were being circulated by an organization calling itself Canadian Jewish Alliance inviting all Zionist groups and societies to send delegates to a conference. The council, believing the time too inopportune for such a conference, decided to inform all affiliates to abstain from participation for the time being; that the council had been considering calling a conference ever since the war began; and that when the time would be found proper to convene such a conference, the federation would take the necessary steps towards its realization (April 27. 1915).

The Adler conflict became more openly hostile, deeper and more durable on the public level. For the community, the value of his sheer presence was never questioned. For the many who

developed the taste of the aficionado for his particular quality and for his enrichment of life in Montreal he remained, precious and counted as a treasure unto several generations.

But all this was at no small cost to him, a cost which never ended but with his life.

The Adler's campaign of denigration of Brainin included a long attack on the former editor of the Adler by the highly regarded critic *Baal Machshoves* (Dr. Eliashev) upon the announcement by Toshiya Publishing Co. of the publication of some thirty volumes of collected works of Brainin (Nov. 1915).

There were multiple causes of conflict between Brainin and Wolofsky, some of them dating to the publisher's invitation to his editor. Some were deeply psychological, some relating to their distinct roles as employer and employee.

Clearly Brainin was not completely happy in his work, and by October 1914 he had determined to become a Jewish publisher on his own. In this confusion of private nightmare, in a world at war, Brainin took a characteristically ill considered step. In poor judgement he confided in Peter Bercovitch, the lawyer in whom he did not really trust.

"He promised me hills and mountains. He did not deny any of my plans I entertained for the future -- in clear speech, or in implication. He said Yes to everything. The word No is not in his conversation. That is the manner of American politicians and public figures, Christian or Jewish. They all promise, all agree, all consent, and never oppose any project placed before them when it suits them But generally these promises mean nothing. There is an infinite gap between thus he said, and this he promised and this much did he count out.

"In fact I did not ask him for anything; only that he should act as my counsel, to watch for my legal interests. But when he heard that I am ready to establish a daily newspaper, he applauded my decision and emptied his bag of promises before me. I knew at once that this flow of light promises was of no value.

"How few are reliable Americans. I am feeling my way in the dark to find persons willing and able to help found a Yiddish daily and a Hebrew weekly."

In Brainin's state of mind he clearly did not realize that Bercovitch was an intimate of H. Wolofsky, and that the lawyer would instantaneously report to the publisher that his editor was planning to set up a press in competition. In any event, Brainin had in the meantime taken other active steps to realize his plan and Wolofsky had heard of this plot against his life project from other channels.

THE RIFT IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

The war had marked an important stage in the development of an independent Canadian national awareness, not least in its participation in international affairs.

This was equally true for the Jewish community of Canada, suddenly cut off from historical and family sources, suddenly fixed by the limits of its growth, suddenly no longer a part of the North American Jewish refuge, but a delineated community with concerns of its own.

The fateful questions had implications far beyond the specifics. Everybody in the Canadian community knew their import. This time the answers were not to be imposed by some authority. The people were to take part in the discussions and in the decisions. The public had become an important element.

With the outbreak of the World War in 1914 a fundamental ideological rift appeared within the Jewish community which was to divide Canadian and American and other Jews for many decades.

Now there was need for assistance for the relatives whose addresses were now lost through the confused dislocation of war. There was need for an organization to aid the Jewish displaced.

Brainin recommended on August 30, 1914 that a committee be set-up of representatives of all classes of Canadian Jewish society to provide aid for Jewish war victims, not in the spirit of charity but of Jewish fraternity. Wealthy Westmount Jews saw the problem related integrally to the assistance of all Montreal poor.

How was this assistance to be secured? How was it to be transmitted? How was it to distributed? For what end? Who was to decide? With all these charity-motivated questions there went power elements: in the resolution of these issues authority and power would naturally be vested in those at the head of the response and at its point of implementation.

Brainin had been invited to the U.S. conference of the Zionist Organization of America together with Shmaryahu Levin. He had hoped that the problems of world Jewry would be considered at the session. (August 28, 1914).

Belkin recalled that the plan for an American Jewish Congress, spurred by B. Zuckerman and N. Syrkin at the American Zionist conference of August 1914, was supported by Brainin. This activity was later continued in Montreal by Brainin through his Der Veg, which led Wolofsky to oppose the Folks Farband of Canadian Jews, over which Brainin presided.

A new Jewish experience created a new Jewish reaction. Even the horror of the trenches called forth new Yiddish rhymes -- in Winnipeg no less than in New York. A 1918 Yiddish chapbook of 32 pages issued by "Ferlag Winnipeg" has a social interest far beyond the literary. *Milchomeh Weyen* (War Woes), poems and sketches by Ezekiel A.M. Bronstein, Mordecai Miller and H. Galsky, conveyed the futile and hopeless cosmic suffering of the trenches later developed by Remarque: yet coupled with a call to the uniform.

The community mobilization for the increasing needs of the local needy and for Jews overseas was not in debate in the community. The manner of raising this assistance, specifically Jewish overseas assistance and its scope and its distribution was a question that was to tear the

community -- and many communities -- for decades. Brainin was at its centre, and it tore him apart as well.

These issues brought forth two sets of responses among Montreal Jews which reflected the internal ideological differences; broadly speaking between the more integrated west end, concentrating on the national patriotic nature of the fund, and the more recently arrived immigrants whose families were trapped in Europe and who agreed with Brainin that "the war was the third *Churban* (destruction) in Jewish history."

The issue of relief and its organization in Canada thus appeared on the scene. A multiplicity of answers emerged with far-reaching results for Canadian Jewry. The *landsmanshaften* with their common concern for their particular locality overseas, were vitalized by the emergency and by the climate of war. Their spokesmen became even more articulate.

This universal perception of the world crisis was set forth by Brainin in a series of articles.

Characteristically, H.M. Caiserman foresaw the immediate need of preparing to receive the thousands of Jewish immigrants who would be coming after the war and proposed that funds be raised for the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society.

Several mass meetings culminated in the November 14th conference of 200 delegates from sixty synagogues, organizations and societies. Under the pressure of this public opinion the younger members of the "Uptown", the children of the second generation of Lithuanian Jews who had come to Canada in the 1860s (Lyon Cohen, S.W. Jacobs and others) agreed on a compromise. Brainin, spokesman for Europe and for European Jewry, the philosopher of contemporary Jewish history, the observer of east European Jewry, the Zionist, the Hebraist, viewed world events from a perspective different from native Canadian Jews. He saw the outbreak of the 1914 conflict as the explosion of profound cumulative pressures which would have further reaching consequences for the far-flung, fragile Jewish society which was centring, numerically and historically in the Slavic lands.

He proposed a profound review of the world Jewish position in the light of developments commencing with material for the Jewish refugees displaced by the Russian authorities and extending to post-war planning, securing human rights for the Jews in Europe, future Jewish migration, realization of a Jewish state in Palestine, etc. He suggested that Canadian Jews establish a joint committee to this end consisting of 15 uptown men and 6 representing the downtown, with Brainin as Vice-Chairman.

The joint campaign for overseas and for local causes raised $24,000, but the controlling uptown retained $18,000 for their favourite local causes, including a soup kitchen, and sent only $6,000 overseas.

The bitterness generated by this betrayal rankled for decades, particularly since Toronto Jews, who entered into no compromise such as Montreal, transmitted all their receipts across the ocean.

The humiliating lack of understanding on the part of the establishment towards the immigrant population exploded into a positive program, historic in the annals of Canadian Jewry, and particularly in the life of Brainin.

Bitterly the leaders of the downtown concluded, jointly with their Toronto colleagues, that a

democratic Canadian organization should conduct overseas aid work and should concern itself as well with the political and group problems of the Jewish community.

The issue appeared in the conception of the suffering of Jewish civilian war victims overseas. Canadian Jews of all sections agree that it was essential that material assistance be extended to these victims to the utmost measure. The philanthropic element was not at issue, nor was the fraternal relationship which impelled this action in question.

The issue that arose was about an understanding of the nature of the tragedy. The challenge came from a sector of Jewry -- they can be labelled the nationalist -- who saw the tragedy as something that happened, not to some persons who happened to be Jewish, but to a section of the Jewish people, of whom Canadian Jews were another section, in a world war which involved many national groups among whom the Jews constituted one.

Aid to these suffering Jews must be recognized as a program distinct from aid to Canadian civilians, and distinct from the civic philanthropic duty of the war effort and assistance to Canadian victims of the war.

This distinctiveness of the Jewish tragedy, this uniqueness of the Jewish holocaust emerged long before Hitler. It struck Brainin, as the spokesman for Canadian Zionism back in 1914. His formulation: the outbreak of the 1914 war was the third destruction in Jewish history, another ruin of temples, the advent of the Holocaust of the twentieth century.

At issue was the nature of the world Jewish crisis: beyond that, respect for the protagonists from the establishment towards the populist organizations, unions, synagogues, etc.

The offence was not to be read in the figures. It was not that the establishment was indifferent or stingy. The Canadian Jewish Committee (note the parallel in name with the American Jewish Committee, an important institution itself not unfamiliar with ideology) raised $140,000 for patriotic purposes by early 1917. (Canada's Effort in the Great War to March 1917 pp.76-77) Canadian Jews contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars towards relief of stricken overseas Jews, but that was in response to other signals.

At this time of passion and reorientation Montreal was fortunate beyond comparison with other communities of comparable size to have inspired intellectuals to articulate and to lead the community. Significantly, they were of the newly immigrated society with Yiddish and Hebrew as their languages and their cultural root, with devotion to Palestine, with a high sense of the centrality of social justice and with deep knowledge of the religious traditions and civilization of Judaism.

Two of these intellectuals who happened to reside in Montreal at the time, Reuben Brainin and Yehudah Kaufman, made up a remarkable team.

"The true founder of the Jewish Public Library and Jewish People's University, its living spirit, was Yehudah Kaufman, who had Brainin named as its president. He introduced Brainin into its activities and its atmosphere, which in reality were alien to Brainin.

"Kaufman was a people's man in all his senses. Indeed his opponents from the left, within his Poale Zion group and outside it suspected his Hebraism, but he loved his mother language deeply as part of his very being and training. I recall his teaching us Yiddish folk songs and Yiddish Chassidic songs even in Jerusalem where most of his conversation and his affairs were

in Hebrew and about Hebrew. He loved Yiddish in all its manifestations and revelations.

"Brainin was different. His years in Vienna and in Berlin had ruined and Germanized his Yiddish speech. His service as editor of a Yiddish newspaper introduced him into the maze of petty matters such as *Kashrut* (kosher dietary regulations) and city elections where all was confusion for him, but he could not avoid seeking to elevate public affairs to greater heights."

"Indeed during Brainin's first months in Montreal the public elevated him to be the spokesman on grave matters. He was the Berliner for the ignorant who came to touch the fringes of his garments as he appeared at important public demonstrations. Kaufman saw the light in the Brainin humanity, the practical community maker. In the library he bridged the abyss between Brainin and the men of the people hungry for creative enlightenment, many of them close to the Poale Zion. Brainin attended meetings of the library, busied himself with elections, campaigns and committees, and teaching the people.

"It is doubtful whether anyone but Kaufman could have convinced him to join the men of the *landsmanshaften* and the Labour Zionists." (M.Z.R. Frank, Hadoar).

In addition to Kaufman, the Brainin team numbered other citizens of rare quality such as Dr. S. Ortenberg, L. Zuker, N. Cheifetz, I. Figler, M. Solomon; Torontonians, M. Goldstick, I. Freiman, Leiser Rosenberg, H.M. Kirshenbaum, I. Matenko, L. Koslowsky and Winnipegers, B. Sheps, A.I. Cherniak, I. Perlman, L. Meltzer, M. Selchen, A. Ossofsky, W. Keller, M.A. Gray.

An address to all Jewish organizations in Canada by Brainin on March 23, an eloquent document at the base of Canadian Jewish Congress history is remarkably prophetic when we bear in mind that it was written early in 1915, less than a year after the outbreak of the first war.

"Our people throughout the world naturally look to you to see that we are safeguarded for the future, and I know that their trust is not misplaced. The civilizing influences of Great Britain and France ought to have some effect on the Russian and other governments which have hitherto denied us that to which we are entitled."

The major Jewish dislocation apparent at the time was the deportation of Jews from the immediate front, before the anti-Czarist and the red revolutions, before the pogroms, before American entry into the war, long before post-war planning became a general concern, before peace conferences and international negotiations for the post-war world and the mobilization of public opinion towards just frontiers and minority rights, long before the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations, and decades before cold pogroms and holocaust and the proclamation of Israel restored.

Yet the document reads as if Brainin had written it with mid-century newspapers before him.

It lists Brainin as president; Zuker as vice-president; J. Kaufman as secretary; N. Cheifetz and S. Selinger, assistant secretaries; M. Solomon as treasurer; M. Figler, financial secretary, and an agitation committee headed by F. Aronof and including J. Welicovitch, S. Yelin, I. Kivenko and A. Eisner.

Cheifetz was a union man, one time secretary of the Poale Zion; Welicovitch was a Labour Zionist, long active in the Amalgamated Clothing Workers; S. Selinger was among the

founders of the Jewish Public Library; F. Aronof was one of the founders of the Farband in Montreal; Kivenko was a member of the Dorshei Zion in Montreal as early as 1906 and was among those who transferred their allegiance to the Poale Zion to organize that movement in Canada.

Brainin wrote "Great days have come for the Jewish people: days when our people suffers most bitterly and hopes most stoutly; days when we are perhaps passing through the final, the most horrible chapter in the history of our exile, in which our ancient nation must fight like a young lion its final and most important battle for liberation.

"We have ourselves become great with these great days. Wherever the pulse of Jewish community life beats the Jewish masses are penetrated by an electric current, by one sentiment, the sense of responsibility for the great historic moment.

"In an instant the young American Jewish community has sensed the historic role that it must assume in Jewish life. From within them has arisen deep, broad and far-reaching popular movements; all across American Jewry there comes the call for organization and unity.

"'The Jewish Congress' has become the slogan of the Jewish society -- a Congress to be convened by the people itself, where those chosen will express the iron will of the people to struggle for its freedom.

"At this Congress there shall be heard the cry of a people long robbed of its human rights.

"At this Congress the nation will declare openly to the entire world that, in spite of all persecutions and humiliations of centuries and of millenia, it has not ceased to exist as a people and still believes in its right to such an existence.

"At this Congress we shall clearly and specifically state what we wish and what we expect from the Great Powers at the moment when the fate of nations is being determined for centuries to come.

"A Congress of all the Jews of America has become the slogan of courage for us. To it we bind our best hopes for a better future for our people and for a better Jewry in America.

"We are more than convinced that the Congress will define objectives which are not yet clear to us; that it will seek to resolve questions we have not yet dared to raise; that new horizons will open for us, and that the new age will begin in Jewish history, with its convening.

"Therefore, the pulse of Jewry beats so. Therefore the Jewish masses move so. Therefore so much is being done so enthusiastically in Jewish communities, in cities large and in towns small.

"In Canada, too, various strata of our people have begun to feel the need to unite. In Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, Quebec, Winnipeg and elsewhere, there have been set up -- or are being set up-- committees that seek, that strive to do all that is possible to participate in this great, sacred task.

"We have therefore come to feel that we must unite all these single trends into one mighty stream which will bear all classes, all parties, all movements in Canadian Jewry to one great political-national act.

"Thus, there came into being the idea of the Canadian Jewish Alliance with the following platform: The Alliance seeks to unite Canadian Jewry in the interests of the communal, political and economic responsibilities of the present moment so historic for the Jewish people."

The Alliance was also concerned with the education of the young, and overseas aid.

A declaration of principles noted that "the condition of the Jews in the countries at war and their fate after the war is the most urgent phase of the present Jewish reality, and its fundamental and lasting resolution are the sacred duty of the entire Jewish people. The entire history of our nation testifies to the bankruptcy of the practice of intercessionism. The proper resolutions of the Jewish question can be dictated only by the will of the people...

"The voice of the entire Jewish people is a factor that the great powers will need to take into consideration. This voice is already powerful if only because it is founded upon the right of each people to self determination. The Jewish people therefore, need to formulate its demands. Such possibilities can be created only by a people's tribune who come with the directives of the people to deal with the common Jewish interests. Such tribunes can be created only by the purposeful organization and the union of all classes and parties of all tendencies and colourations in the interest of the present great moment...

"This peoples' representation must be formed out of the existing religious, political, economic, cultural, welfare and mutual aid organizations."

Similar meetings were convened by the Poale Zion of Toronto and Winnipeg.

Under the inspiration of Yehudah Kaufman and Reuben Brainin regular door-to-door collections of pennies involved thousands of citizens profoundly and evoked loyalties that had momentous consequences for Canadian Jewry.

A Yiddish statement early in August 1915 appeals for the relief fund through the penny boxes.

"The black box for the relief of our people must hang at the most honoured place in our homes. As we eat or drink, as we speak or read, at work and at our rest, even in the dreams of our sleep the black box of the People's Relief must give no rest to our conscience... The sorrow of our people hovers over us and sanctifies with its black wings the day by day breath of our homes. Our hearts shall not turn from it for a moment... Contributors will be given certificates with the wording, 'He has a portion and a heritage in Israel.' Boxes will be distributed in two weeks, on August 22." The appeal is signed by Brainin and Kaufman.

In this program volunteers were mobilized who went door to door distributing black boxes which were cleared out every week-end. These black charity boxes followed in the tradition of other boxes which had become universal elements in Jewish folk life. By September 15, 1915, hundred of young volunteers called upon these many homes to empty the boxes in 2,154 homes during one day. Significant of the Jewish poverty of the period, the revenue was only $242, but 5,700 individual pennies were part of the response of the call for 'Bread for the hungry, shrouds for the dead'".

For three years this anonymous activity continued religiously, raising $12,000 annually. One volunteer, Leibus Klein, exceeded his peers in dedication; Zvi Reisler, soon to don the uniform

of the Jewish Legion, was the most devoted of the organizers. (S. Belkin, The Labour Zionist Movement in Canada, 1904 to 1920, (in Yiddish) 1956 pp.130-134).

On September 20, 1915 Goldstick reported to Kaufman on the collections by the Toronto conference: $3,500 raised directly and $3,000 collected by several congregations.

A meeting with Brainin took place at Massey Hall, the Toronto News reported, Over $700 was raised and resolutions adopted favouring "the calling on all the Jews in Canada to express a desire for better treatment for Hebrews in those countries in which they are at present subjected to certain disabilities, and to ask for Jewish representation at the next Peace Conference."

During the First World War, always inspired by the dignity and passion of Reuben Brainin, relief became a symbol of an ideology which related this national philanthropic appeal to the concept: The Jewish people can resolve its problems and can shape its fate by organization. The words "relief " and "Congress", with its Zionist connotations, became virtual slogans which were to animate the community for many decades, in Canada as in the United States and elsewhere.

The name of the group, the *Folks Farband*, which sponsored this activity, was of particular significance. It implied numbers, the entire people, rather than the initiatives, the invention and leadership of individuals. But it also signified the entirety and the interests of the nation. The Zionist nationalist term "*folk*" was an essential in the name of the Jewish National Workers Alliance, of the Jewish People's Library and the Jewish People's University, the People's Kitchen, the Jewish People's Schools in Toronto. The *Folks Farein* was the title of a major social welfare institution; commercially the connotations may not have been alien in the People's Credit Jewellers. In other realms the term was included in the Jewish People's Order and in the People's Choir. It would be of some interest to trace the disappearance of the term from the institutional name record of the community.

TENSION

Brainin's departure from the Adler in no way removed Wolofsky's influence upon the editor's life. Indeed, the hostility became decisive in the development of important issues in the community in which the two antagonists were involved, such as the Canadian Jewish Congress, the People's Alliance, the raising of funds for overseas relief, etc.

This clash of policies, based largely on personalities, was so painful that several activists associated with Brainin's cause, including Schneour, failed to support his chairmanship of the Alliance in order to establish a sort of neutrality. It did not help.

At one point in June 1915, Rabbi H. Cohen accompanied Wolofsky to a People's Alliance conference which was considering a resolution to request the Canadian government to intervene with its Russian allies to moderate its policy of expelling its Jewish citizens. They explained that a number of "prominent citizens had met in the office of the Adler and had concluded that such a step by the Alliance, which would be seen as an intrusion into the internal affairs of Canada's ally, would be unwise."

They implied that the Alliance was irresponsible, radical and inconsiderate of the views of "the experienced old settlers in the country." The conference refused to hear the visitors and passed the resolution.

A July 1915 conference of the *Farband* set November 18 as the date of a national convention of Canadian Jewish organizations to determine the assistance to be given to overseas Jews and to discuss the type of support Canadian Jewish residents, as British subjects, might expect from the English government and from the world powers. This gathering was to discuss a World Jewish Congress at which Canadian Jews would be represented.

On August 5, 1915 the Adler set forth the major points of its attack upon the People's Alliance in the guise of a program for Orthodox Jewry. Speaking in these terms, the newspaper rejected the idea of forming special institutions to deal with different functions in the community.

"Jews do not have special ministries with portfolios. No Alliance can present itself as the ministry of finance for Jewry, with the sole right to collect funds for the needs of Jewry. If we are to measure Jewish organizations by their majority, Orthodoxy has priority by thousands of years; they are as trustworthy as any alliance.

"In the case of diversion of funds raised for local causes to overseas causes: those moneys had been collected for local causes initially with some of them to be sent for overseas purposes.

"The People's Alliance is not an alliance if it does not include in its ranks Orthodox Jews. It is a newly founded body which needs to prove itself, to show that it is capable of becoming an alliance of all people from whence great peoples' undertakings can emanate.

"We favour a united Judaism in Canada and elsewhere, but such a unity does not yet exist; our brethren will starve if we wait with our collections until such a unity comes into being.

"Indeed, when the orthodox associations of Kehilloth launched a campaign for overseas civilian war sufferers at the end of July, the founding assembly agreed that a portion of the proceeds should be allocated to the Montreal Talmud Torah.

In a less intransigent mood the Adler regretted the divisions which had risen about the concept of a Congress.

"All Jews now admit the need of a congress; this is self-evident. but now every faction has its own version of a congress. We have a Zionist version, a socialist version, a national socialist version and a Fifth Avenue version. Each organizes committees, drafts resolutions, convenes mass meetings, proposes resolutions and argues endlessly. In this manner communities have been destroyed in the past and assimilation arose. We fear it may happen again with the Jewish Congress. No one can state with certainty who will accomplish much and who will bring full or partial redemption. Unity would be a great asset; if we cannot unite on this unity it is very, very sad". (Aug. 1, 1915)

In its "A Few Serious Words to the Folks Farband" the Adler wrote, "A powerful committee of the wealthiest and most influential members of the community has undertaken to raise a substantial fund for the victims of the war and to provide continuous income as long as the war continues... The Folks Farband proposes instead to put up 10,000 charity boxes in Jewish homes and to have collectors visit these homes every fortnight.

"The first committee has already raised thousands of dollars overseas for food and medicaments; every penny raised has been transmitted, with no overhead costs, while the Folks Farband is still raising moneys to pay for the boxes and to print circulars. The city committee can raise no suspicions of mismanagement. They are the same community workers who have been maintaining our philanthropies for many decades.

"The Folks Farband can find many other urgently needed activities: they might ensure that Jewish peddlers who are victims of violence may not, in addition, be fined in the courts; that Jewish children receive an adequate education and need not resort to Christian missionaries; that Jewish girls be saved from the ugliest of nets." (Aug. 20, 1915).

Clearly there was a deep misunderstanding of the issues, quite aside from personal conflicts which were openly identified.

In the eventual outcome, the side of the uptown campaigners won out; their major fundraising far exceeded the five thousand dollars raised by the Peoples Alliance. But the democratic congress was attained on the program of Brainin and Kaufman in 1919 and again permanently in 1934.

A July 1915 attack in the Adler upon Brainin, though nameless, blamed him as "a microbe, dangerous to the future of a number of efforts to improve the community."

In October the Adler carried a letter from Rabbi Julius J. Price of the Goel Tzedec Congregation in Toronto denying that he had maligned Brainin.

Rabbi Price denied in a letter to Brainin that, in a lecture he had delivered in the McCaul St. Congregation, he had said that Brainin was "a curse upon Canadian Jewry", as reported in the Montreal Adler, "I have not mentioned your name in the lecture.

"I have now written to the editor of the Adler demanding that he publish my letter in which I wrote that the statement in the Adler is an utter lie. If they do not publish my letter I will take the strongest measures against them. They cannot libel people and make use of my name". He assured Brainin of his friendship and his best wishes for the new Der Veg.

The rabbi, who had a brief tenure in Canada (1914-16), had interested himself deeply in the history of Jews in Canada and later published a number of documents on these annals, including some "Unpublished Canadian papers Relating to Benjamin Hart" in the Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society, Nov. 23, 1915, pp.137-40; "Jewish Settlements in Northern Ontario" in the Canadian Jewish Chronicle, June 16, 1916; "Samuel Jacobs of St. Denis", in the Chronicle, June 23, 1916, reprinted in American Israelite, June 28, 1916; "Jews in Canada, the Hart Family of Three Rivers", in The American Israelite, June 14, 1916 with corrections to errors in the Jewish Encyclopedia (VI pp.241-42). He also wrote in Yiddish on "A Jew Played an Important Part in the Development of Canada", in the Yiddisher Journal of Toronto, June 13, 1916.

Brainin recalled in Der Veg on Oct. 17, 1915 that the Alliance "had been attacked from its birth by irresponsible men in control of the Jewish press" who did not hesitate to resort to libel. "The organization representing two hundred Jewish institutions ranging from orthodox to radical, were accused of theft and of being street Arabs and socialists."

Within weeks the personal attack on Brainin resumed even more violently and possibly, more effectively. But another phase of the conflict about the Alliance and the Congress idea welled up on another front.

The Federation of Zionist Organizations in Canada and its powerful and highly respected president since 1899, Clarence I. de Sola, came out in opposition to Brainin, the intimate of Herzl and the creator of the most intense Hebraic ideology.

Brainin had addressed the 12th Zionist counsellors at Ottawa on July 1, 1912 and was elected vice-president of the national organization.

In 1913 he attended the World Zionist Congress in Vienna as delegate from the Canadian Zionist Federation. The 13th convention in Montreal on December 28, 1913 re-elected him as vice-president.

At half past two in the morning of April 23, 1914 Brainin returned from a four hour meeting of the Zionist executive in the de Sola home which was conducted in impeccable parliamentary fashion on an agenda which contained nothing and the discourse was petty, according to his diary entry.

"But the meeting room in the de Sola palace was broad and full of beauty, fine portraits and statues in the eastern style. I have, however, participated in many serious sessions which met in poor and small chambers."

Brainin was delegated in September 1914 by the Zionist federations to the special conference in New York to deal with the situation created by the war in Europe.

By 1915, Brainin's young associates were already the intellectual spokesmen for the team who were to lead the Zionist movement and the community for the half century ahead: Michael Garber, Jonah Myerson, A.B. Bennett, A.J. Freiman, Moishe Dickstein, and Yehudah Kaufman, the visionary who was to illuminate Judaism and Israel until his passing in the late 1970s.

In the heat of the conflict one could ask who were the leading Zionists in the federation - a

question that was answered four years later by the deposition of de Sola.

This shift of the conflict transferred the social strife between the established community and the newly arrived immigrants to the Zionist platform. This strife had taken many cultural and political forms during the earlier thirty years, for example on the level of the legislative committee of the Baron de Hirsch Institute.

A remarkable document of this period from Myer Hornstein of London, Ont. records that the Canadian Central Jewish War Relief Committee in Montreal urged the local London group to transmit what they had raised for overseas through them. When local resistance arose to that suggestion, the Montreal group charged the London body of acting under the influence of Jews of German origin. Protesting these allegations, Hornstein published the case in Der Veg of Feb. 16, 1916.

The Baron de Hirsch institution had been very active and successful in representing the community before governments, and was beginning to feel the need for a more general mandate from the community at large. It had proposed an enlargement of its legislative committee, but very soon learned that a sharing of authority would come concomitant with that procedure.

But the parent body, the Baron de Hirsch Institute, was very sensitive to such an incursion upon their authority, particularly by men from the immigrant world whose intellectual influence was growing even inside the English-speaking community.

The plan for the broadening of the committee was dropped. In 1914 the distribution of the funds raised largely for the relief of Jews suffering in the war zones had created a deep crisis.

THE ZIONIST COUNCIL REACTS

The creation of the nation-wide Alliance constituted a threat to the Zionist federation quite outside its war relief program. The Alliance was a nation-wide organization with strong motivation and ideology, and was therefore a competitor to the Zionist federation as a would-be accredited spokesman of Canadian Jewry with a much wider mandate, not limited to the reconstruction of ancient Israel.

President de Sola, the only national president of Canadian Jewry, had much at stake: a mandate from a union of scores of organizations with devoted members from coast to coast, the only mobilized national fund raisers, men, women and children, rich and poor, Yiddish and Hebrew as well as English. Also at stake were his world-wide connections and his personal and family standing.

De Sola might have become head of the Alliance and of the Congress and have received a broader mandate from the hands of newly arrived immigrants. But that would have implied a flexibility of personality and of class not easily expected at his age - or of his colleagues in the Baron de Hirsch Institute, or in the council of the Federation as then constituted.

In the summer of 1915 the Zionist Council learned that circulars were widely distributed in the name of the organization calling itself the Canadian Jewish Alliance inviting Zionist groups as well as other societies to send delegates to a conference.

The council, believing the time inopportune for holding such a conference, decided to inform all affiliates to abstain from participation for the time being; that the council had been considering calling a Jewish conference since the war started, and that when the time would be found proper to convene such a conference the Federation would take the necessary steps towards its realization. Conditions for Zionist work continued to be very difficult, even the holding of a convention was considered unwise, if not dangerous.

Invitations were sent out to all Jewish organizations having a membership of 25 to send delegates to this Jewish conference to take place on November 14. Originally, it had been planned for Nov. 7, but it was postponed for a week to accommodate U.S. Justice Louis D. Brandeis, guest of honour, together with Dr. Shmaryahu Levin.

On September 14, 1915, the council of the Canadian Zionist Federation decided to convene a Conference of Canadian Jews on November 7, in Montreal to discuss Canadian participation in the American Jewish Congress to be held the coming winter in the U.S. on the interests relating to the war and its consequences upon the Jews of all countries.

President de Sola explained the reason for the Zionist conference: to form an organization to watch for justice to be rendered to the Jews when the world peace would be discussed and decided.

"In no sense will this conference be confined to Zionist bodies. It is foreseen as a representative of the Jewish community in Canada. Delegates from every Jewish institution in the entire country will be invited, including synagogues and all representative Jewish societies as well as Zionist groups.

"The council of the Zionist federation has taken the initiative of calling this conference because the Zionist body is the largest Jewish organization in Canada and has branch societies in nearly

every city, town and village in Canada and therefore is in the best position to contact Jewish bodies across the entire country.

"We wish to emphasize that non-Zionists and anti-Zionists will be represented at this conference in the greatest possible measure, for it is the intention that this conference represent the view of the entire Jewish community of Canada."

Clarence de Sola, founder of the Federation of Zionist Organizations in Canada, the first and for many years the only nation-wide Jewish organization in Canada, had written to Toronto late in September 1915.

"I ask you whether you believe that people, who have been in this country two or three years and who in fact have no knowledge of British constitution or of British attitudes, are as competent to speak for Canadian Jews on questions of this sort as those who were born in this land or who have lived here for long and have been the leaders of the Jewish communities in this country."

On September 25, 1915, the council discussed an invitation received from the United States to participate in a proposed Jewish Congress (Leon Goldman -"History of Zionism in Canada" in The Jew in Canada, Toronto, 1926. pp.291-313).

While the Zionist Federation introduced the question of participation of Canadian Jewry in the planned congress of U.S. Jews, they nevertheless specified their awareness that important objective conditions separated the two communities. A very strong sense of Canadian Jewish particularism suddenly arose on all sides of the ensuing debate.

One of the journalists of the Adler, A.M. Mendelbaum, wrote clearly on "Canadian Jews and U.S. Jews" (October 19, 1915).

"As Canadian subjects we should participate in the forthcoming congress; it is of the greatest importance. It is important to determine our position on the questions to be considered at the Congress, for Canadian Jews must bear in mind that Congress will meet in the U.S. and that we differ in some regards from Jews in the U.S. and in other neutral lands who may attend the Congress. For Canadian Jews are British subjects who are, above all else, loyal to the British flag and conscientiously aware of the interests of our empire.

"We shall be very careful that all questions and resolutions that will be considered at the congress are in accord with our obligation as British subjects. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the leaders of Canadian Jewry, the true representative of every section of the Jewish population of Canada, should attend the congress, so that the best and most capable forces of Canadian Jewry will join to determine the policies and acts of the congress.

"We call upon the officers of Zionist organizations in every city or district to convene mass meetings of Jews to elect delegates to the conference in Montreal on November 7, 1915."

With the announcement of the Zionist sponsored conference the Adler initiated a vociferous campaign against the People's Alliance which it called a machination by several of its former collaborators who had lost a strike in the daily newspaper. "When shameful efforts to discredit the Adler uptown failed, they turned to flattering the workers." (Sept. 25, 1915) Brainin was also accused of misappropriating funds secured for overseas relief.

"For the Alliance is a virtually non-existent body which is being utilized to obtain moneys from the uptown, sometimes by blackmail."

The Alliance, said the Adler, is only an instrument to maintain Der Veg and to destroy the Adler.

The People's Alliance (the Folks Farband), stated that they planned this conference some six months before the Zionist Federation decided, in September 1915, to call a national conference in November.

Brainin referred to the leaders of the Zionist Federation and their supporters "who have nothing to do with Zionism. It is impossible to deal with them... We tremble as we remind them of the terrible rift which must come in Canadian Jewry because of their conference and they reply, 'The hall has been rented.'"

I. Yampolsky responded to De Sola (Der Veg, Nov. 12, 1915), under the heading, "The Eternal Greenhorn."

"In matters Jewish, they say, I am still green. In matters of Judaism, they are aware that they know little. But in questions of leadership, of how to speak to the *goyim* on behalf of Jews, the people of the American Jewish Committee and the Zionist Federation of Canada have decided that I am too green to have an opinion. But not in the eyes of the Canadian government."

The Zionist Federation was, of course, aware of the Congress movement in the U.S. and considered, even before Turkey became a belligerent, the convening of a similar conference in Canada desirable but it was uncertain about the appropriate timing for such a conference. Affiliated Zionist groups across the country by September 1915 pressed for an early conference.

On the other hand, the Zionist Federation complained, in a hostile Yiddish pamphlet, The Conference of Canadian Jews - A Complete Report in its Origin and Prospects (1915, 15 p.), "Brainin seized upon the Zionist plan for understandable reasons, for he has proclaimed himself president of the Alliance before the conference on relief had had its first meeting... The creator of the People's Alliance was about to establish a newspaper to compete with another Montreal Yiddish paper; he was seeking popular support to sell shares and win many readers. The partners in the newspaper were elected officers in the Alliance. Those who attended the frequent meeting of the Alliance were urged to buy shares for the newspaper-to be; the existing paper was condemned as being sold out to Montreal capitalists.

"The Alliance goes hand in hand with personal interests. False press reports were disseminated about the bluff of the Alliance which consists of only the leaders and a few groups formed for the purpose, such as the Jewish Public Library frequented in a small reading room with several youths; the *Merkaz Ivry* with a dozen Hebrew speaking young men; the People's University which is about to be born; the Jewish People's School, recently founded in competition with the Jewish National Radical School. Nearly all of these groups have Brainin as president."

The pamphlet had a number of references to dangers posed by "unwise" action by the community under delicate wartime conditions. "Influential personalities must not take part in the conference because we in Canada must be very careful. We must have people who know how to avoid speaking in a manner which will draw the anger of government circles... The

Alliance even threatened to create a disturbance at the conference planned by the Zionist Federation in September for November. But this they will not dare do because Canada is at war, and any attempt to hamper public meetings will be severely punished by the civic authorities.

"At one of their meetings early in their proceedings they considered a resolution to the British authorities protesting pogroms in Russia. Prominent Montreal citizens warned them not to dare so dangerous a step which could bring great trouble to Canadian Jews. This is wartime, and the Canadian population is inclined to be friendly to their Russian ally. It is indeed a matter of mortal danger to Canadian Jews to protest at this time against England's friends.

"The Alliance leaders condemned the eminent citizens of the community as traitors, in writing and by the spoken word, for conducting discussions behind the curtain and they repeated their intentions of sending their resolutions of protest. But after exploiting this incident for their propaganda purposes, they put their plan aside, fearful of their own daring."

The Zionist publishers of the pamphlet set forth their long range plans:

"The conference convened for November can accomplish no miracles. It can arrange for the first assembly of all Canadian Jews, in consultation with government circles. It will call a national convention of Canadian Jewry when international conditions will render it appropriate. In the meantime the conference will plan domestic affairs including overseas relief, provision for future immigration, united charities in all communities, etc."

Yehudah Kaufman contradicted the official Zionist description of the composition of the People's Alliance as he described its Montreal delegation of ten en route to a Toronto conference of the Alliance.

"A Mizrachi, a Poale Zionist, a businessman, a worker, a thinker, a man you would meet on the street, an idealist, an activist woman - and myself, an errant, doubting soul.

"Ten distant, differing worlds have joined in the will to unite Canadian Jewry.

"In my corner I thought what they also thought: We are building not what we want but what we have to build; because a higher force is driving and commanding us in the name of the history of our people. Brainin had spoken to us about this function. Is it not peculiar that we, the green ones, had taken upon ourselves the colossal function and have dared, not only to speak about a Canadian Jewish Congress, but as well to begin to take the first necessary steps that lead to the realization of this grand idea?

"I marvelled how fresh and strong the seeds of the idea incorporated in the People's Alliance must be if, in spite of all hindrances and attacks, it has persisted for a year, and now is convening its first consultation of delegates from various towns across the nation.

"I felt like singing with the rabbi of Berdichev,

> "So, probably, it must be that
> You are sons of God, your God,
> You are sons of God, your God...

"We meet for the first time; yet it seems that all of us have known each other for years; from

Cheder - in Bible and in *Agadah* (legends); I have read and heard of these same Jews." (Der Veg, Feb. 11, 1916).

The Federation had opposed the Alliance and the Poale Zion, but, even as they planned the Zionist convention set for November, an effort had been made, not quite unsuccessfully, to join forces for that gathering, and an agreement had been reached for a single assembly to be convened by 25 representatives of the Alliance and 25 of the Zionist Federation.

Nevertheless, in mid-October the Zionist group decided to act alone and to convene on its own responsibility a congress of Canadian Jews at the closing of their own previously arranged annual convention.

Foreseeably, it was a declaration of war, not only between the ranged forces, but also within the ranks of organized Zionism in Canada. Brainin, the president of the Alliance, was in the centre of the tragic conflict. For a month, between October 24 - November 20, 1915, Der Veg became the platform of one of the bitterest controversies in the annals of the community.

Kaufman summarized the cases against the conference, "It will represent the smallest portion of Canadian Jewry. It will be an insult to American Jewry: They have been discussing the Jewish question for a year, and now the conference proposes to resolve it in a day with several speeches. Its convenors are distant from all the woes of the Jewish people. They are influenced by the jingoistic press which is deliberately silent on Russia's anti-Semitic policy.

"Such a conference cannot choose a proper executive to implement policies which may lead to a national Jewish program. It is virtually devoid of the broad Jewish masses. It plants hatred instead of unity; causes conflict instead of united actions. There is no God within you; you lack seriousness, responsibility, true confidence in our power and the sense that together we are a messenger of a great historic mission. In all, I say to you: It were better that this conference had never been created than for it to have been created." (Der Veg, November 12, 1915)

Among the important documentation in this controversy is Brainin's article "Open Words to Our Zionist Federation", October 24, 1915.

During the first war much larger sums were being raised by other groups in the community. One such group operating downtown, less working-class in its coloration, organized by activists from the synagogues, was the Central Relief.

The wealthier members of Canadian Jewry made a very successful appeal across the dominion. They sought to keep ideology and politics as well as social issues out of their effort, but by keeping apart from the other relief groups at first they developed their own Jewish philosophy and later became a party to an important social dispute with them.

For them, again, philanthropy had long been an ideology and a program for Jewish action abstracted from other Jewish ideals. Their action now was on a much larger scale than the assistance program of an earlier generation which had mobilized for the reception of Jewish immigration.

In all some $2,000,000 was raised in Canada for overseas relief, an effort unprecedented in the small community, much of it recently arrived, and barely established. It was a harbinger of the still greater role the community would play in the later drama of the twentieth century Jewish history.

This philanthropic organization worked on a nation-wide basis, the second national Jewish body, after the Zionist model. For the first time in history we find the Canadian community being appealed to by world Jewry through the voices of Lord Rothschild, Lord Swaythling and the Chief Rabbi of London, and responding substantially to this appeal. The list of contributors is a useful predecessor to later published lists of contributors to central Jewish causes -- truly a Roll of Honour of the participants in Combined Jewish Appeal.

Like much else in this country, Canadian developments paralleled American experience and were influenced by them to such an extent that they are sometimes seen as branch operations. As in the U.S., the three relief groups in Canada later joined in a common effort after they had made their ideological point and mark. In the U.S. the merger created two remarkable institutions which became the Jewish counterpart of the International Red Cross - The United Jewish Appeal and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

A Canadian Jewish Committee to aid the war victims convened a conference on August 29, 1915 at the Baron de Hirsch Institute, where the offices of the committee were located. The invitation was signed by leading citizens: Mortimer Davis, Mark Workman, Moses Isaac Freedman, H.M. Levine, Sol Kellert, H. Bloomfield, Isaac Lightstone, H. Wolofsky and A. Harris. Among the signatories: S. Schneour, as secretary pro tem. A copy was addressed to the Canadian Jewish Alliance.

The Canadian 1916 relief experience was a vast social and emotional experience, a chapter in history which bore consequences for the immediate and the long term future. Although wartime exchange regulations affected the transmission of funds for overseas relief from Canada, a score of Canadians from Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, Winnipeg and Vancouver figure on the Roll of Honour.

Brainin was encouraged by action in Canada. "From America, in spite of all expectations, the calls for help sent by our brethren in distress during the past years have been insignificant. The various aid committees, the heart-rending appeals, and mass meetings convened with the best of intentions by the most eloquent tribunes did not evoke fraternal compassion among American Jews," he wrote.

Montreal responded effectively. The appeal had been addressed to Mortimer B. Davis.

"Accustomed to dealing with large projects, he accepted the challenge of starving Jewish war victims. The initial sum of $25,000 was remitted at once to Mr. Rothschild, and a commitment of $200,000 was undertaken. All Canadian Jews participate in this collection. Whoever abstains from the drive would do better to convert.

"The British leaders sent telegrams to the Jewish communities of the empire urging collection of funds for the war victims."

"The Jews of our so-called Uptown are performing their duty and deserve our recognition. Significantly, at this grave moment, the most radical wing of our community on the one hand, and the most nearly assimilated wealthy on the other are demonstrating their Jewish sentiments.

"Regrettably from our orthodox, from whom we would expect much, we are noting so little activity and much apathy. S.W. Jacobs has remarked sharply and aptly that many fast on Yom Kippur but do not act when hundreds of thousands of their brothers in the lands of war are

forced to fast the other 364 days of the year.

"If Montreal will raise the $200,000 promised, the example will be effective in New York and elsewhere." Der Veg Oct. 22, 1915).

Davis set up the Canadian Jewish Committee led initially by Mark Workman, Mr. Vineberg, Lyon Cohen, Isaac Friedman, D.S. Friedman and A.Z. Cohen of the wealthier element of the community, and raised $165,000 in Montreal by January 1919. The amount eventually raised in Canada reached $270,000; most of this was transmitted to London, but some part was sent to the American Jewish Distribution Committee. Western Canada collected some $390,000.

This amount constituted the bulk of Canadian Jewish war relief during the first war. The totals included the Canadian Jewish Alliance and the People's Relief ($50,000), the Central Relief Committee ($57,000), the Toronto conference ($150,000), (S.K. Belkin "Jewish War Relief Activities in Canada," in The Jew in Canada. Toronto, 1926 p 524-26).

The generosity of this period is comparable only to the campaigns after the second world war, in 1945.

But the political and cultural consequences of these fundraising campaigns can in no sense be compared to the contributions elicited by the popular Jewish generosity.

A remarkably harsh revolutionary document in social tones came from a leading orthodox rabbi in the community in language authentically Hebraic: Rabbi Simon Glazer.

"There are moments when the mind must follow the heart, when the spirit conquers facts, when we lose control, when a secret force casts us beyond the horizon.

"I experienced such a moment when I read that some Jews will convert a theatre here (the Gayety) next Sunday into a political market place.

"In spite of my firm decision to withdraw from all public activities, I find myself in conflict as I write these lines. I do not know what force is driving me to protest, to appeal, to beg, and to pour out the waves of my resentment.

"No Jewry in the world has to tell the Great Powers what program they will have to implement on the day when the word peace will no longer be seen as shameful in the civilized world.

"But our communal workers are crying out through the columns of the English press that they will show the way to England, Russia, France, Italy, Germany, Austria and Turkey; yet they represent no Jewish organizations.

"If this was happening only in the Jewish district, I would not enter the fray.

"You consider yourselves spokesmen for Canadian Jewry. Who created a Jewry in Canada for you? Who built the institutions whence you draw your honours? Who cleared up, washed and polished St. Dominique, Cadieux and other streets for you?

"You would push Jews to the abyss of anti-Semitism; where were you when Jews were dragged sleeping to police stations and to stables, when Jewish orphans were lost to us in Christian institutions?

"Did you ever try to crawl over shaky steps in tenements to look for a *minyan*? Did you, leaders of today, go to seek out the lonely, the poor, the sick? Did you ever try to feed your children on the wages paid by small synagogues on the Jews' streets? Did you ever sacrifice an hour of your repose for those who are truly the people? No.

"Americanized, comfortable businessmen have built temples and large synagogues for you, their children, where you hear outdated, meaningless sermons, and you are given powers and seats at the head table. Be satisfied with your portion.

You have Sherbrooke and McGill Streets. Keep them and enjoy each other. Leave Vitre, St. Cadieux and St. Dominique Streets alone. You have left their Jewish citizenry. How can a divorcée live under one roof with her former spouse?

"You have no right to take any political position on behalf of the million captured, exiled, usurped Jews.

"This is no time to make any claims of any nation. The world is blood thirsty. The first lamb to cry will be eaten up. When animals are lost in the forests the shepherd may not whistle.

"Hold your Zionist conventions, but leave general Jewish questions alone.

"I warn you, you have hampered my work for years, but have stealthily adopted my ideas. I had decided to be silent.

"But if you will dare next Sunday to touch my people, the victims who brought me up and fed me, from whence I grew, whose pain I feel, whose voice now wakes me up -- I warn you that my action will be such that my battle with you during the past decade will be but a preface.

"The newly constituted Jewish 300, the self-appointed providers of the people's needs are coming to St. Urbain Street, to us -- they are not convening in their district. They come to the people to be applauded by Jewish workers, peddlers, petty merchants. Why?

"I believe that I do not need to ask their permission to address the Jews for whom I have sacrificed what may have been the best years of my life. On the contrary, I feel I should express myself. I have more right to do so, and I am less likely to be suspect

"I have refused to live on the salary from my people, or other such income. But I have never resigned my title or my sacred duty to serve my people at a moment of danger or to serve Jewish interests as I see them and when the time demands my views.

"Convening a conference now is not my concern. If it were not harmful, I would not intervene. But my concern is aroused when I am certain that such a measure at this moment is dangerous and can bring misfortune upon many of our people.

"When I fought for the observance of the Sabbath in Montreal and in Canada, for Talmud Torahs, for *Kashrut*, for *Shechitah* in Halifax, against anti-Semitism -- these 300 persecuted me at every step. They could confuse matters by charging me with serving my personal interests.

"Who among them could assert now that one word in any of these accusations is truthful?"

"Who could accuse me of speaking out against their dangerous steps in self interest? Who could claim that the Jewish people had mandated them to appear in the English press with a ready program for the world powers as to how they should deal with Ancient Israel."

When the Zionist Federation calling for the controversial conference urged the community to hang out flags from their homes, I. Yampolsky was shocked by the bad taste of such gala displays during war time when so many Jews were being done to death on the front and behind the lines.

"A Jewish celebration?" he asked as he cited one of the sacred books of the Jewish faith: God had been angry at the Jews when they sang His praise while so many Egyptians were dying at the Red Sea. "The works of my hands are drowning in the sea, and you are singing the *Shirah*!" (Nov. 11, 1915).

The disputed Zionist conference of November 14, 1915 was a sad affair if only because of the absence of Brainin whose presence at the two earlier conventions had established him as the only intellectual and spiritual force in Canada, where he had happened to be by chance, to quote A.B. Bennett (Der Veg, Nov. 21, 1915).

The same article sounded a note for the future, significant because of the signatory; "The discontent on the part of young people at the conference in regard to procedures may foretell changes."

The most positive outcome under the circumstances was that the distinguished guests, Justice Louis D. Brandeis and Shmaryahu Levin, helped the delegates agree that the convening body would co-operate with community bodies to convene a Jewish congress.

It named a Canadian Jewish Committee to watch for its interests.

The conflict at the conference concluded with a formula: The gathering in effect, recognized itself as a pre-conference to a wider, more representative gathering which would be convened by an executive to be named and organized by representatives from the Zionist group and from the People's Alliance.

"A great word was proclaimed today in Jewry: A Jewish congress in Canada! In this preparatory work we shall need to apply all the intellectual and energetic forces which Canadian Jewry possesses. They must begin to mobilize now.

"It is a new word, a new idea, and demands new methods." ("To The Peace", in Der Veg, November 15, 1915).

That week Brainin resigned from his office in the Zionist Federation. His letter to this effect was not read at the conference.

Immediately after the conference of November, Brainin turned to the crucial preparation of a Canadian congress which could deal with post-war problems within the country and internationally.

"Clearly, no matter how great and influential Jewry may be, they cannot now approach the peace conference with the old fashioned begging for their unfortunate and persecuted co-

religionists. For the first time in the annals of our exile they must appear before the tribunal of nations and claim their rights.

"Only the demands of entire peoples that speak as such will be respected.

"Thus American Jews are organizing a congress of representatives of all classes and parties which will formulate Jewish claims. European Jews are in favour of a World Jewish Congress but before appearing at such a world assembly, the Jews in each country must meet democratically for the great day before us. This is the commandment of this hour. Generations not yet born call upon us: Organize, unite, save us from eternal persecution.

"We have proclaimed a democratic Jewish congress in Canada, the expression of all our people." (Nov. 26, 1915)

On November 24, 1915, Brainin spelled out the function of the conference of the People's Alliance: To establish a central committee which will convene a pre-conference for the Canadian congress and will develop its platform and its agenda and to set the date and place of the congress.

"The methods which have been used by our opponents, openly and secretly, to destroy the Alliance and to libel its leaders have diverted many energies and have brought about lethargy and even despair among some of our workers. This is a sad condition which will affect our work for our people overseas and our duties towards our nation."

Brainin reminded Canadian Jewry on November 26, 1915, "The nations of the world are discreetly preparing for the coming peace.

"Our people have suffered relatively more than other peoples. American Jews are therefore organizing democratically. The most important Jews of Europe are in favour of a World Jewish Congress. But before such an assembly, the Jews in each country must, wherever possible, have their own national democratic meeting.

"We have issued such a call, a sacred call to Canadian Jews.

"It has resounded in all Jewish circles in Canada. We have proclaimed a Jewish Congress in Canada, and for it to be realized it must be properly prepared.

"We call upon all who favour such a congress to be convened on democratic principles, to make this project known in their organizations and in their spheres.

"It must be discussed from every point of view. The entire Jewish population must become interested in it, so that the Congress will become the expression of Canadian Jewry.

"Canadian Jewry cannot be excluded from world Jewry.

"Since democratic principles are now recognized in the entire world, we must fight for these principles in our country.

"We, too, cannot permit one class, one group or a few who have crowned themselves to speak in the name of all Canadian Jewry.

"The congress idea must mature and then assume complete expression in reality.

"A congress in which all Canadian Jews are represented by their elected delegates will unite the Jewry of this country with the organisms of world Jewry. This will begin a great epoch of Jewish communal life in Canada as well, which may be fated to play a substantial role in the future.

"Henceforth, the congress idea must dominate every Jewish gathering in Canada whatever the occasion of its convening. Its warm pulse must be felt in all our community movements.

"Our life in this country today is grey, work-a-day and without content. Only a great idea such as the Congress project can give it content and a measure of sanctity." (Nov. 26, 1915).

FADING OF BRAININ'S EFFORTS

It soon became clear that it never was the intention of the Zionist Federation to convene the Canadian Jewish Congress, and the People's Alliance found themselves too weak to carry out their intention to crown their Congress themselves. A new tone entered the Brainin discourse.

After the fiasco of the Zionist-sponsored conference in Montreal, general interest in the Congress idea quieted in Canada; In the U.S., too, the shock of the 1914 outbreak was reduced into the horrible routine of war. The end of the conflict was not in immediate sight. Brainin wrote on Dec. 7, 1915, "When the congress idea appeared on the agenda, it seemed as if American Jews had awakened; new hopes, new expectations. New perspectives were born in many Jewish hearts even across the ocean. But the congress movement came to a full stop.

"Now this American general public slowly lost its faith in a congress to be chosen and delegated with popular directives.

"We can conclude that this project can be realized by purposeful continuous daily work.

"We must gather and measure the deep faith in the hidden popular forces. This work is now only at its beginning."

Brainin's article "Messianic Times" in his Der Veg of January 3, 1916 is remarkable when we place it precisely in the context of its time. It is the more difficult to appreciate scores of years later, when little children from some schools talk of the Messiah as just as certain of appearing as tomorrow's episode in a T.V. serial, not to speak of irresponsible fundamentalist preachers who blabber it as if it were religious dogma.

In the days of Brainin the conception of Messianism in East European Judaism, both among the traditionally orthodox and among the liberated agnostic and even among the atheistic, was much more sophisticated. No one had dared to imply any date, any concreteness, immediacy or definition to it for the last thousands of years. Under these cultural conditions, however, even Jewish atheists and sceptics discretely, admitted messianic elements in their thinking.

Brainin, not the least sophisticated in the galaxy of Jewish thinkers at this time, dared to indicate, "the faith in Messiah the redeemer, the faith in a higher justice, a higher humanity, was born on the ruins of Jerusalem, on the mounds of ash and coals which were left of the ancient glory and brilliance of David's capital.

"Here is the renaissance of a more deeply honest humanity, of a faith in the restoration of Zion, in the rebirth of the Jewish people and its governance.

"This firm faith accompanied the Jewish people in its constant wanderings, and Messiah can come any day.

"Our ancient sages, our spiritual leaders have always sought to strengthen faith in Jewish hearts that it will come; that the end must come to the continuing troubles and sufferings of the Jewish people; that one fine morning the message of freedom must sound in the great *Shofar*. The Jew sufficiently purified in exile by torturers for his faith, for his truth, for his sense of justice will raise his bowed head and straighten his bent back, fill his lungs and his chest, and his fatigued, extinguished eyes will strive with self awareness and with pride which are justified.

"When Messiah comes the living and the dead will return to Zion and the entire Jewish nation will breathe free on its own soil, under its own incomparable sky.

"Israel's revenge will be to spread light in all the dark corners of the earth, as the Jewish people returning to its own land will inform the world of new truths and freedoms.

"This sweet faith has been an elixir of life sustaining and encouraging patience in suffering. In all its destructions the selected idealists have seen the signs of the coming of Messiah.

"The Talmud has enunciated these signs: Impertinence will spread, costs of living will rise; the wisdom of the learned will cause the people to shudder; truth will disappear; young brutes will insult the old and the experienced; son will offend father and daughter will speak up against mother.

"When the generation will sink so low, the spark of the tradition of thousands of years, remaining in few hearts, will not permit that the Jewish people end in such shame. For what of the assurances and promises of the Jewish seers and prophets? What are the purposes of so much struggle and endless sufferings?

"The faith in the Messiah as the redeemer never ceased, but his image in the fantasy of the people has altered.

"Until the liberation, the emancipation, Jews saw the mysterious wondrous Messiah riding the clouds, as a pauper on an ass, or as an old man in golden chains to whom angels bring every night the Book of Memories where all that happens on earth is recorded. The old man reads and cries and laughs, but when he comes to read the sufferings of the Jewish people he struggles to tear his golden chains with all his power for shame. But an angel whispers in his ear 'Your hour has not yet come.'"

"To this day," Brainin wrote on January 11 in his editorial "On the Realization of a Jewish Congress in Canada," "not one person has opposed a congress here. Even those who arranged the Zionist Congress openly accepted it on November 14.

"There remains only the question of where and how it should be convened, with what platform and agenda, and who should be convoking it.

"A pre-conference of the components of the People's Alliance would be a practical first step."

Before Brainin's departure from Montreal, he penned a message to the Canadian Jewish Alliance. His views on the fundamental issues reflected Jewish conditions of the day. They set in relief the ideals which he had championed so valiantly during his period in Canada.

"The day when this Congress will open will be the greatest and most important day in the history of the young Jewish settlement in this country."

Kaufman recalled the convening of the People's Alliance as the forerunner of the Canadian Jewish Congress. "This Alliance came in a fortuitous moment of faith in the People's vitality, when what is courageous, beautiful and sacred that was seething in the soul of the people awakened in militant energy, with a thirst for action.

"It came in the storm of the cannon in Europe, under the hellish fire of millions of shells flying over the heads and hearts of young Jewish soldiers on all fronts, in the light of Jewish *shtetlach* being burned and demolished, as brothers and sisters cried out in despair, as Canadian Jews began to dream of uniting into a single force to react to the endless persecutions and evil decrees which have already destroyed the major centres and which could, if continued, destroy the entire Remnant of Israel.

"We recall the Days of Awe when we created a people's tribune of our representatives who spoke out on the vital problems of the existence of our nation, the belief that in the hour of national danger we can unite to fight for our rights: We are proud to have this Canadian instrument which even the Jews of the United States do not possess.

"Who could have anticipated the national crime which is the arrest of action about the Congress? Not the bitterest enemies of the Congress idea, those few who fought the tens of thousands!

"The widest sections of our people have responded to the very name of Congress as to a major revolutionary slogan. The atmosphere about us has become sanctified, as the storekeepers in their shops, women in their kitchens, our great labour associations, our tiny sick benefit societies, our political organizations and union locals in chapels and synagogues, in scattered communities -- all spoke, hoped and dreamed of the Congress, adopted resolutions about the Messiah-idea of the Congress reflecting the injustices of generations.

"Who, indeed, could have expected such an expiration of such a healthy, mighty people's movement? Our ideologists might have feared that our untrained masses might prove indifferent to the congress idea. But our largest numbers had responded to the term congress as to a magic revolutionary slogan. It had seemed as if a political force not utilized for centuries, dormant deep in the soul of the people, had torn itself away and now was demanding activation in the Congress movement.

"Their spines unbent; the language of beggars changed to proud daring demands. What enthusiastic faith and self confidence was implicit in the resolutions formulated in scattered communities consisting of a *minyan* of families: 'Our Jewish congress shall demand of the Peace Conference of Nations full political and national rights in the lands of war and our historical rights to Palestine, our home!'

"The invisible Bastille of Exile has fallen and the entire Jewish people has raised a vast and mighty Flag of Liberty on its ruins.

"Where are we now with our flag?

"A few enthusiasts are still about it, to save it with their last strength -- but the alleged leaders, the well born, the anointed, the wielders of power, the diplomats who came close to the people for a moment, have united in a counter attack -- to delay, to postpone until the diplomatic moment...

"We have been disappointed in our dream of an undeterred march to victory. We were opposed by blind ignorance and by deliberate hatred of our peoplehood and by filthy politics. We have emerged weakened, but true to ourselves, faithful to our banners, not bending a single principle with no speck upon our flag.

"American Jews were weakened by their strife for a congress. The paralysis that struck them affected Canadian Judaism. But the destruction of our people has not ceased. We are revolted by the very sight of this inaction.

"What is this diplomatic moment? Do the Jews interfere with interests of the great American democracy when they meet in Congress to consider their natural interests? Do they disturb American neutrality when they protest against expulsions of Jews and libellous accusations of espionage?

"Talk of the diplomatic moment is only meant, to cool the Jewish masses who have spoken too much recently about Jewish democracy. It is only an instrument to demonstrate who the true leaders are, regardless of conventions and conferences: The strong will always prevail; not as the greenhorns would have it." (Jan. 10 and 16, 1916)

The eloquence of these two great Canadian spokesmen is moving and prophetic as we read their words seventy years later, from the vantage point of what was to become the Canadian Jewish Congress.

The Congress movement in Canada was languishing partly because its parallel in the United States was also inactive. Brainin noted on Jan. 16, 1916 in a moment of waning confidence, "It will not be possible to strangle the Congress idea. The more farsighted, the healthier among its opponents will themselves take part in it and will not remain outside the camp.

"But the defenders of the Congress desire only that all classes and strata of Jewry, from the furthest on the right to the extremist leftists, be democratically represented at the Congress." ("The Congress Idea of Canada", Jan. 16, 1916)

Canadian Jewry was not homogeneous. What happened in Winnipeg was not necessarily what happened in Toronto. The Congress idea and the People's Alliance had their own histories in these regional capitals.

An immigration commission was formed to establish bureau's in communities where there were none, and to contact existing immigrant aid bodies so as to create a national Jewish immigrant aid society.

Brainin was elected chairman of a central committee in Montreal with L. Zuker as vice-chairman and Kaufman as secretary.

In Toronto the People's Alliance was more successful than in Montreal, as the opposition was less adamant. Brainin testified that the Alliance found its greatest support in its Toronto division. "The active brethren in the Toronto conference determined the moral victory of the Alliance.

"It was reported there that a group of citizens propose to constitute themselves as a Board of Jewish Deputies on the British pattern; the conference resolved to veto the formation of such a board 'for no section of the Jewish population is justified to speak in the name of the entire community.'" (Feb. 4, 1916)

Winnipeg was characterized by a remarkable number of unusual community workers quite variegated in philosophy and background. The labour ideology there was coloured by an agrarian philosophy centred as much in the prairie metropolis as in the rural settlements. The

impact of Dr. C. Zhitlowsky in Winnipeg and Calgary was more striking than in Toronto or Montreal.

In November 1915, delegate M.J. Finkelstein from Winnipeg told the Zionist conference that he favoured a Canadian congress. He was supported by David Ben Gurion.

On August 27, 1916, soon after he was forced to leave Montreal, Brainin was invited to the first assembly of western Canadian Jewry convened by A. Ossovsky, A.J. Cherniak, Marcus Hyman, and B. Sheps. The conference still called for a congress session as soon as possible.

A much harsher development slowly came about in Montreal, not totally unexpected to Reuben Brainin.

As early as November 9 Brainin had written, "I will not believe rumours which a certain person has disseminated to the effect that some of the Zionist leaders are boasting that they can send me out of Canada as a revolutionary and as a dangerous man, but they do not wish to do so." (Der Veg, November 9, 1915)

Wolofsky immediately denied that there was any such plot afoot against Brainin (Adler, editorial November 10, 1915); it was only Brainin setting himself up as a martyr.

Brainin left Montreal and a creative chapter in the complex biography of a leading personality in Jewish history came to an end. During the years that followed, he did not forget Montreal and ensured that the link continued. His body was interred in a historic cemetery on Mount Royal, his library and a part of his archives are preserved in the Jewish Public Library which he helped establish in the spirit of his own idealism.

His numerous Canadian co-workers cherished as a private heritage the idealism he nourished. It remained a lasting personal stamp upon them and, during his many visits, a confirming presence.

Both Kaufman and Brainin passed the summer of 1918 in Quebec, and Kaufman represented Montreal at the August 2 conference there for the convening of a Congress.

In point of historic developments, regardless of the Nov. 1915 developments, the Jewish community waited until March 1919, four months after the armistice, to convene the first Canadian Jewish Congress and to begin a new epoch in Canadian Jewry. At that Montreal convention it spoke out in the interests of European Jewry in the post war world and in regard to Palestine; it communicated formally with Ottawa in regard to immigration; it organized the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society and it became the drawing board for vast community programs ever since.

THE JEWISH LEGION

Meanwhile, the war was raging, and the British government was soliciting the support of Jews -- politically, financially and -- lo and behold -- for the first time in thousands of years, militarily. It was calling Jews, not only the British Jews, to enlist for service in the Palestine arena in a distinct Jewish unit; again, an unprecedented challenge.

Helping the British government fell to the Labour Zionists and to the "progressive" wing of Canadian Zionism, which was becoming increasingly resentful of the philosophy of the Zionist leadership under de Sola. The enthusiasts followed V. Jabotinsky, Ben Gurion and the recruiting officers.

The Canadian military did not forbid British subjects, friendly aliens and Canadians not subject to the military draft to enlist through the British-Canadian Mission in New York.

It was enough to enable Reuben Brainin, who had been authorized by the Legion Committee in New York to deal with the movement in Canada and start the ball rolling. With the help of his two sons, who in the meantime had become non-commissioned officers and had received a furlough for the purpose, a recruiting office opened in Montreal. One of the Canadian volunteers, Bernard Joseph was appointed director.

"To step up the recruiting campaign, a call was issued pointing out that the 'The Jewish Legion is the beginning of the fulfilment of redemption -- a concrete expression of our people's striving for a new life which will strengthen our political weight won on the battlefields of other nations.' The Prime Minister of Canada, Sir Robert Borden, in a letter to Corporal Joseph Brainin, declared his 'sympathy with the purpose for which the Legion is to fight.' That letter apparently was intended to soften the erroneous impression that the Canadian government was opposed to a Jewish Legion, an impression that had stemmed from its opposition to a Canadian Jewish unit." (E Gilner. War and Hope, a History of the Jewish Legion. N.Y., Herzl Press)

The response was mildly positive.

The initiators of the Legion Committee called on Reuben Brainin to join the Committee. The veteran Hebrew-Yiddish writer not only consented, but said with great warmth, "I'll give you my two sons."

An eye witness reports,

"Among the parents escorting their sons was Reuben Brainin, father of Joseph and Moses Brainin. He was a handsome, patriarchal man with deep brown eyes and an impressive beard. At the final 'all-aboard' signal he hugged his two sons and got off the train. He paused to look at the eager young faces at the windows of the train."

Roman Freulich in his Soldiers in Judea described the scene,

"Reuben Brainin stood on the platform and addressed the recruits: 'Boys, listen to me; it is better to die in the Land of Israel than to return into exile.' Everybody shouted, 'Good -bye!' slowly the train pulled out. Brainin watched the receding train waving his felt hat as tears streamed down his cheeks."

DER VEG, A PAPER WITH NO PRECEDENT

In September 1915 Der Veg appeared. It was all that Brainin hoped and all that Wolofsky feared: one of the most excellent Yiddish periodicals that ever appeared.

The Poale Zionist vision was conveyed by the Brainin-Kaufman team with ideological consistency, a perception based upon current horrors in Russia, the significance and the historic roots of the Holocaust, the urgency of relieving this tragedy, the need to prevent this cruelty from spreading, and the priority of placing the Jewish problem in its meaningful reality in the context of unfolding major world events, so that the Jewish people could snatch ultimate salvation from the very jaws of evil.

A program of such profundity could be realized, they argued, by the entire Jewish people committed to it. The two Montreal prophets pledged themselves and their followers to this historic task.

Brainin made ringing appeals for aid to the Jewish victims of the war. "We ask you", Brainin pleaded in his editorials, "Can you remain quiet, happy and satisfied with yourselves or with your small circle of friends, with your personal interests, knowing all the while -- as you no doubt know -- that the Jewish people are now passing the most destructive phase of their existence, with the millions of our brothers and sisters (among them your own brothers and sisters) in the most unfortunate circumstances, in the very jaws of starvation?"

He wrote early of the need for a congress to collect moneys for suffering brothers, victims of the world war.

Fifteen months into the war Brainin wrote in his Der Veg, "The Jewish press in America has written enough (the press on the other side cannot write) about the incomparable tragedy that has befallen our brothers and sisters in the lands of war. They have fallen on the fields of battle, in the pogroms perpetrated by their fellow-citizens, on the soil for which they spill their blood, in the economic ruin, and in other horrors.

"This suffering has been so often described that it has come to have no impact on most Jews in America. It is no longer a sensation. The Jewish sense is dulled, the conscience of national responsibility is weakened and silenced.

"Our present moral ruin may now be greater than our material ruination. No less frightening is the spiritual poverty and the political short-sightedness of most American Jewry in this great moment. It has not stood the test. Our prominent Jews among the Americanized are proving immature, petty and insubstantial in this earnest time.

"They who would represent us before the outside world are proving too powerless and, truth to tell, narrow of heart to raise the large sum needed in this national disaster of our three million. They respond with methods of petty charity to the catastrophe of a people.

"This poverty of our wealthy prominent Americanized Jews is reflected in their stand before the political challenge of the moment. They come with cold remedies to put out the conflagration which has seized the Jewish people; with outdated intercessionist techniques do they seek to resolve a complex national problem.

"In reality the Americanized are very little Americanized as they opposed the democratic spirit

of the public Jewish Congress, the true chosen representatives." (Oct. 1915).

In retrospect the Brainin-Kaufman team surprised themselves by their foresight during the crisis of the First World War as they looked back a year and forward decades ahead in Der Veg of February 4, 1916.

Addressing himself to the February 1916 Toronto conference of the People's Alliance, Brainin recalled, "The basic principle of the Alliance was born and developed in Montreal whence the call went out across Canada: Jews, brothers, children of one people, of one fate. Unite on one platform, into one alliance, whatever your class or your stratum in society, whatever your tendency or trend in Judaism; unite because of the great Jewish tragic ruin of our people, for the rescue and the salvation of the Jewish people, because of our common future." (editorial, Feb. 4, 1916)

On the same page Kaufman began his examination of "The Canadian Jewish Congress" and "Canadian Jewish Democracy."

"A type of prophecy underlay the naming nearly a year ago of the People's Alliance. They believed that they were forming an alliance of all Canadian Jews, regardless of class and party and life-style.

"Our founders were aware that for our plutocracy -- those who had already attained status and were already well off, and our aristocracy, the individuals and groups whose mark consisted of the absence of any links with those who speak Yiddish -- for them a world war does not suffice to lead them hand in hand with the larger masses.

"The People's Alliance has been fated to become the voice of Canadian Jewish democracy, of the Jews who speak Yiddish, think Yiddish, and feel Yiddish, in this country. This is no superficial mass: It is composed of various elements -- orthodox and radical, employers and workers, liberals and socialists, intellectuals and simple citizens, religious and agnostic, materialists and idealists. They are united by three credos:

1) Our historic duty to help our brothers in the lands of war,

2) help given effectively, concretely, not only for the moment, but for generations,

3) help to Jews by Jews, as an expression of the action of all groups within Judaism.

"The idea of the Jewish Congress is particular, distinct from the congresses of other peoples which have been erected from the top. The masses of the other peoples have forced their way. In the Jewish case the people would induce their aristocrats to join them on the principle of equality and equal status.

"This union is therefore difficult and even artificial. Democracy understands this, but it does not surrender its hope for a united front. There are both combats and compromises for the sake of union. We need the possibility of speaking in the name of Canadian Jewry. No one can usurp our rights or speak with the great powers without our sanction".

The voice of the Brainin and Kaufman team and of the sector of Jewry whom they mobilized for Canadian action found extraordinary expression in Der Veg.

Der Veg reported in its issue of Feb. 25, 1916 that an Italian named Kunets appeared before Judge St. Cyr the day before on charges that the youth had attempted to cash a $42.00 cheque signed by the proprietors of the Dominion Soda Water Co. The proprietors of the firm denied having signed the cheque.

"The accused, however, declared that the cheque had been given by someone with him in a certain club. A detective accompanied by the Italian made a search, and the Italian pointed to Morris Strasberg, who was naturally arrested. He denied knowing anything about the case and pleaded a frame up.

"Never did a Jewish community so urgently require a periodical which would express the true feelings and thoughts of its citizens. Never did Canadian Jewry need a responsible, democratic and honest newspaper as at present, for never in its bloody history has Judaism, wherever it is to be found, have on its agenda such extraordinary national, political, and cultural obligations.

"Thirty years of significant literary and publicistic activity on behalf of Jewish people have won for Reuben Brainin the authority and the right to sound his word out loudly much more than those who have been insulting Brainin during the past year.

"The name of Brainin must serve as the guarantee that the Veg will always defend all the interests of the one party -- the Jewish people". (Der Veg, Oct. 17, 1915)

Der Veg describes its first days: "The street outside was crowded as passers-by watched the linotypists punch letters into metal, letters which journalists had written out and had handed as 'copy' to the printers. The glances from outside meet the eyes of the men in the editorial rooms in sympathy. Some eyes narrate the feelings of the heart, the response is from the home; fraternal, friendly." (Oct. 22, 1915)

Those five months of Der Veg were a remarkable concentration of journalism and of Jewish current thought which had no parallel in Canadian community annals. It was a concrete embodiment of the best that Brainin could publish under conditions of even greater freedom than Wolofsky had apparently offered him. Dozens of Canadians and international figures greeted its issuance, often in terms which were themselves literature.

Of course the names of Brainin and Kaufman outshone all other contributors, and the constant and colourful mark of Isaac Yampolsy enriched nearly every page of Der Veg. These three names, with that of Mr. Shmuelson, and J.B. Goldstein constitute an anthology of Canadian Jewish literature until the 1920s.

After one week's publication a reader commented accurately, that the six days' issues were worthy of reprinting as a volume; such also were the succeeding weeks of publication.

Most important the weekly became the voice of Brainin and his associates who in fact were the remarkable creative sector of Montreal's immigrant society.

During its brief duration Der Veg was a very effective instrument in the ideological conflict which lasted for at least three years. It concluded with Brainin's departure from Montreal, the end of the Clarence de Sola regime in Canadian Zionism, and a shaken Adler which did not recover for more than a decade, until the arrival on the scene of its great editor, Israel Rabinovitch in 1926.

The Adler felt threatened in its very existence and combated, not only Brainin, but all who sympathized with him, supported him or collaborated with him in all public issues. (Belkin, pp.165-66)

One of the less well-known groups which Brainin energized into life, the People's Press Organization, welcomed the arrival of Der Veg on its first day in terms which were characteristic of the men and the situation.

"We came to life through our deep faith in the truth which you never ceased to propagate; that a living people must have the opportunity of creating its own pattern of life; must be able to speak, but must also make its imprint upon the teachers; must fight off self-appointed leaders; must have as spokesmen only the gifted sons of the people, who share its joys and woes."

Der Veg could not have been that popular in the mass sense in spite of the editor's populism. For one, it was partisan, sometimes bitterly partisan, along lines rendered more complex by the war. The community was more torn than ever in its history. Along these cleavage lines, Der Veg and its editor were not only on one side of the conflict; they were one side.

The paper was ideological. It did not seek to appeal to the religious, the men of the "societies", the less literate, or the women.

It was elitist. It was syndicalist. It opposed the west end. The only organizations reflected in its pages were the labour unions, particularly the union of the unions which devoted itself to strengthening the syndicates which required all the community's strength during these difficult days merely to continue; the leaders were constantly striving to regain the positions they had lost in recent months.

The pages of Der Veg may constitute a systematic exposé of the experience of a prophet at a cataclysmic moment in history when the messianic vision is about to become real.

If Brainin was prophetic in his early Hebraic phase when Judaism needed the Herzl type of analyst at the end of the century, in his Der Veg period, with the outbreak of world war and the letting loose-of-floods and the holocaust, and the flow of refugees, Brainin called for the second phase to awaken somnolent American Jewry to their role in a world where their continent was the only survivor.

For ten months Brainin had been seething but silent. Now he was free even of Wolofsky, stylistically liberated of the restraints of editing a large newspaper of very general interest, to announce the age of 1914-45.

When he was able to have his editorial published on October 19, 1915, he exploded in "At Work", "For three years I have spoken every day to the Jews of Canada, particularly to the Jews of Montreal. For three years I have been feeling and experiencing the public interests of the Jewish population.

"Spiritual and moral threads have woven me to my readers during these three years. I have had daily proof that it is possible to influence and to do good through the printed word when it is serious and sincere.

"A Jewish paper, when it is dignified and maintains its level, has the significance of a parliament, a people's university.

"I have come to love the young Jewish community where fate had cast me. To employ the Talmudic expression: 'At first by force, finally by will.'

"For I believe in the future and in the possibilities of development in the Jewish settlement in Canada. It is possible to create much here on new foundations; there are broad fields to sow.

"During the past ten months I had been robbed of the possibility of speaking daily to the Jewish public. As a Jewish optimist I can now say all that God does is for the best. I have learned much during this time, not only from books, but even more from the first source, from life itself. I came in closer touch with the people, with their material and spiritual needs, their suffering in their struggles; I have come closer to the ever fresh sources, even if hidden; sources of idealism and readiness to sacrifice which flow in the soul, the true people's soul. I have gotten to know the better part of our young people, our working people; their thirst for knowledge, being with them, downtown, not as a writer or a journalist. As our proverb has it, ask not the doctor, ask the patient. On my own body, I learned the effectiveness of public medicine, the printed word. This has been the vivisection of my own soul."

Brainin's own writings were not only confined to the editorial; from the storehouse of his literary career he drew upon his recollections on J.L. Peretz (Dec. 31, 1915) on Mendele Mocher Seforim (Dec. 22 & 24, 1915) on Moshe Nadir (Dec. 23, 1915). At the end of 1915 he discussed "Is Zionism a Dream"? (Dec. 22 and 29, 1915) and "Herzl Letters" on January 16, 1916.

Brainin continued to deal with the issues of his concern.

"During these months I have learned that there are words in the press which confuse the mind, turn white into black, and truth into lie. Printed words can poison, can render the air pestilential and can ruin the public organism. I am convinced that the people need their own press where their need and emotions are interpreted properly, where ritual murder accusations cannot be levelled against anyone just because he is disliked.

"Der Veg appears in the most decisive, serious moment in the world history and, particularly in Jewish history.

"In this last great destruction our people, both deliberately and less consciously, seeks new means, ways and instruments to ensure their existence, in the immediate present and in the furthest future; not mere existence but an existence of worth that is justified nationally.

"At this colossal moment the tragedy of the Jewish people has become clear to all thinking minds which can judge a tragedy at its most horrible apex.

"Clearly, as a people, we cannot return to the old ways, with our old sense of insecurity among the nations of the world. To be or not to be? To re-awake with a new force, or to die slowly? To emerge as winners from the Great Destruction, or to disappear shamefully without a trace? These are the questions before us. Fortunately, to our distinct honour, the great Jewish masses, our intellectuals and our best and finest sons -- all who are capable of life and are thirsty for life, all who are capable of battle and are ready for battle -- have responded with a distinct yes, to reawaken and to win. The Great Destruction in the lands of war has evoked a renaissance in other lands of our dispersion.

"The majority of our people is organizing for a vital objective; to demand at the coming tribunal

of the nations our human and national rights in all lands, a demand that bears the stamp of Messianic days.

"But, simultaneously, the open and the concealed force of assimilation -- hateful, backward and crippled -- is also mobilizing, guiding its last energies to compromise and to betray our proud and independent movement of our masses and intellectuals.

"It is at such a great moment of battle and of rebirth that Der Veg appears. Under the sign of a new world history, in the dawn, we seek to stand up for the Jewish people.

"Der Veg takes its place with the refined and the courageous battlers who will awaken all constructive forces latent in all the corners of our suffering people, the last reserve of our hidden vitality.

"In Canadian Jewry as well the word and the act which save must be honestly and courageously supported.

"We are aware of the hard and responsible task Der Veg is assuming. Our birth pains have lasted nine months, for stumbling stones were constantly put in our way; we know who put them there, and what the motives have been."

Brainin noted an increase in Jewish juvenile delinquency early in 1916. "It is a shame for God and for people, for ourselves and for the people among whom we live. We are all guilty because of our poor educational system, but particular guilt rests upon those who accept the honour of representing the community before general society; who believe, or would convince others, that they are the officers, the leaders of the community -- when they are not that in reality. Jewish children know little of Judaism, or very little, and that in a crippled form.

"Missionaries attract Jewish children, with friendship, towards the Christian faith. They may, we hope, not convert many, but the young souls can learn love and respect for the Gospel rather than for the Jewish Bible. Who of our so called prominent men care?

"Our Talmud Torahs are seen in the uptown circle as stepchildren.

"We have had a Jewish Public Library for some twenty months, of the finest sort, with a free children's section. Has one of our prominent leaders given one cent to this library? Its very name arouses resentment among them.

"For three years I have been urging the creation of a single board of education composed of all classes of Jews. But we have met only with obstruction. Since the passing of Lazarus Cohen not one of them cares about the Talmud Torah or about Jewish education in general." (Jan. 7, 1916).

Brainin admitted he was shaken by cynical perceptions as he addressed "the dull men of the Zionist Federation, with their levity toward human worth, who repel with the dirt they dig up from the human soul.

"But the longer and more profoundly we live with the sorrow, the deeper we fall under its rule, the more we surrender to its government. We begin to justify its law: that is how it is; that is how it should be; it can be none other.

"As we hear the sorrow of the war world speak the language of the great thinkers, we can forgive their horrible conceptions of the world. We can console ourselves: they have lived evil days, in times of social anarchy, when the earlier worlds sought to pass away, and new worlds has not yet appeared; when the unrestrained that is in man had appeared in all its wildness, and the powers of construction were still dozing on the yonder side of human awareness.

"In such unfortunate moments the great minds of mankind have sought to understand, with gall and blood, the nature of man, and have spit it out.

"Are you aware that the millions of Jews, now unfortunately overseas in the lands of war, look forward impatiently, in despair, but with hope, to the first proud and free Jewish words, demanding claimant rights from the nations of the world? Are you truly united by the great destruction of our brethren? Are you ready and in a position to be the first to speak the courageous words for which two thousand years of exile are awaiting? Are you aware that by this conference you are injuring Zionism, not only in Canada but everywhere?" (Der Veg, Nov. 14, 1915)

In Der Veg, as in the life of the immigrant community, Kaufman and Brainin maintained a remarkable identity of perception. They saw the current events in the community in biblical perspective as key events fundamental in eternal Jewish history, signalling the end of the European Jewish age in an inferno of warfare and holocaust, possibly the Israelite's redemption within the liberation of the sacred land of Israel and the looming emergence of American Jewry. In this near Messianic panorama, anonymous players without letters of heritage, unaware that they were in the theatre of the universe, they climbed on the stage under the foot of Moses and Ezekiel.

BRAININ'S PERSONAL CRISIS

We may be erring in our reading of the Brainin diary of the fall of 1914, more precisely his editing of this portion of the diary at least a decade later as he prepared it for publication. The diary appeared posthumously in 1940, years after it was written, and is therefore possibly revised in retrospect.

This is one of the Brainin personae which is distinct from his articulations in other environments; from his statements of strategy, or statements of personal relations.

If these published diary pages of the early war months are to be believed, we read a different tone, voice and content from other days in his diary. We learn that August 1914 produced a revolutionary shock upon this Jewish thinker in a particularly sensitive situation as a citizen, family man, journalist, public figure, North American thinker and employee – not, to note, as a Jew.

His Europe was cut off behind him, divided and internally shattered within each nation; his eastern Europe clearly destroyed by war and its Jewish communities pulverized and threatened by more horrendous pogroms, revolutions and holocausts, the intellectual conscience silenced by nationalisms and patriotisms; its Tolstoys, Ibsens, Bergsons, Clemeceaus, Wells, Munsterbergs -- mobilized to bring their people's youths to slaughter. "…Culture is burying its masters, and its great masters are burying European based culture, the dollar has become a whole dictionary of words. The exorcism of the European capitals has left only one sound in the peaceful world -- the pursuit of the dollar, the rule of the dollar, the scraping before the dollar, faith in the dollar, the science of the limitless dollar" (Aug. 16, 1914).

Brainin felt alone in the world, the sole survivor of the nuclear inferno, wasting his opportunity and his life in a universe atomized and pulverized, even as he, the Hebraist, was broken in frustration in Yiddish Montreal, within the confines of the Adler. His ancient dream came to him not as a dream but as the confirmation of his earliest perceptions and as the resolution of the present and the future.

Even before the war he wrote in his diary on Feb. 11 and March 23, 1914,

"On this Purim night of my fifty-second birthday I make an accounting of my life; I summarize my life and efforts and aspirations; I compare my will and my abilities, my past and my future and I sense a secret hand ruling my fate.

"I deeply regret that several years ago I was forced to leave my literary Hebrew work, and I do not even publish what I write in Hebrew. I weep in secret that I have distanced myself from Europe and my work in Hebrew literature there. I am aware of the great ocean between me and my past, and I cannot see any possibility of returning to my first work there. Even the new Hebrew authors are alien to me, although they are dear and beloved to me for their special simplicity and their perspicacity.

"For the past two years I have limited my literary work to the Adler. Every day I write various Yiddish essays, many of them in my view not without true literary value. Since I became editor I have composed some seven hundred literary pieces: on nations and on men, current affairs, authors and literature, the mysteries of life, social movements and science, recollections, analyses, well known public figures, economics, the problems of Judaism and

Jewish questions.

"But none of these works are of any value to me because they are in Yiddish and not in Hebrew. In truth, I can say that, now that they have been written, it is as if they had not been written.

"I am dust in the literature of Hebrew; but much more so since I am writing in the Yiddish press of Canada, for who are my readers? It is not sufficient that I write in Yiddish to which my soul is not bound; but the newspaper I am editing has no wide circulation for it is not widely distributed in the U.S. and only a few copies reach Europe, and most of my literary essays are written only for myself.

"This is my greatest punishment for the sins which I have sinned and also for the sins which I have not sinned.

"I flagellate my body for having been sold to the Yiddish press, for just now I cannot see my bones being brought out of Egypt.

"During the two years that my family and I have been in Canada I have worked more than during a decade in Europe. I do not have a free minute, for my hours are devoted to Montreal community service. All Jewish affairs, all social activities, all institutions rest on my shoulders. I have established new services in the community. Vision has left me. The Hebrew author has been transformed into a communal worker; I changed my golden cane into copper pennies.

"By constitution I am only a writer and I never sought to be more than a writer, for literature is dearer to me than all the delights of the universe. My present work has convinced me that I have no business with wild people or cripples irremediably devoured by love of money or of honours.

"The residents of Canada are the remnants of the generation of the flood. There can be no bridge or point of juncture between our worlds.

"It is not Brainin the writer who is driven to this fiery, overwhelming public service, but another Brainin, a stranger to the original Brainin. I am always studying philosophy, literature and the sciences, my real life. But public service, with all its precisions, seeks out the hiding places of my soul. The writer that is me looks down upon the activist that is in me. I really have no ability or desire to improve society, to help the poor, to found societies, to build the libraries and people's universities. I enjoy speaking on literature, on serious or national and general problems, but not on charity or local matters.

"I am a drowning man in an ocean of pettiness and my Yiddish literary work is only an instrument for my public service.

"My life in Canada is at the mercy of all; the editor's chamber is open to the near and the distant, to all complaints and demands, to every child and every plaintiff, to the crippled and the stupid -- all pleading for support and help, all robbing me of my time and my energies. Now that I am lost, I admit that I am lost. Resignedly I give them my hours and my strength. I have nothing left for Hebrew literature.

"I am not happy to give to all passers-by, to all the dispirited and embittered souls. I am disposing of my life and soul. I treasure an hour of Hebrew literature above all the days I have

been giving to community service in Canada for which all are grateful to me. I despise my public service.

"In spite of all that is within me, to the embitterment of my spirit I have become a sort of leader, a sort of spokesman for Canadian Jews whose eyes are lifted to me for my words and my judgements.

"That is defeat and descent of the soul for Brainin the author.

"Here I am writing in the Adler on the bitter truth about the community; I fight its strongmen, its leadership, its impertinent representatives. Many find strength and heroism, greatness and glory here. But I regret that I have ceased to fight against the market that has occupied the heart of the Hebrew people in its exilic condition; that I have ceased to pronounce the truth about the national condition from every elevated pulpit and I am forced to fight in a narrow circle against heroes whom I despise. Even if I secure triumph against them it will give me no satisfaction." (Diary, Feb. 11 and March 23, 1914)

Brainin kept recording in his diary his constant, agonizing, penetrating passion; to be freed from Montreal, from Yiddish journalism, from public affairs, from the narrow cage, the Yiddish garbage heap where he found himself after sinfully betraying the Hebrew language. "...I preached national renaissance and the revival of Hebrew from the columns of my Yiddish daily; I called for unity, morality, justice, and I claimed greatness from my people, nor did I compromise a hair's breadth. But I preached to ears that did not hear. Addressing my words to dull, ignorant Yiddish readers was a heavy sin."

From his knowledge of world Jewry and of Europe, Brainin read the war news very differently and came to totally different conclusions than those of the rest of the community as to the essential course of action to be taken by world and Canadian Jewry.

The perceptions of the day about him were further complicated by his immediate work environment, particularly in his misgivings in regard to Montreal and in regard to his coming to Montreal.

BRAININ'S DISAPPEARANCE

The day after the Zionist-sponsored conference, on November 15, 1915, Der Veg reported on its front page a sensational story, which set in motion the impending end of the Canadian phase of Brainin's life.

The report read: "Someone had sent information to the government that Brainin had been born in Germany and is a German citizen; that Der Veg is pro-German and bears a German name; that it is anti-Allied, and that it was founded to spread sympathy for Germany.

"Brainin was informed by a government department of their receipt of this information; someone had come to them with this.

"They were rebutted by his documentation and by the policy of the government.

"Last week a meeting of five local Jews decided that the most efficacious means of ridding themselves of Der Veg and of Brainin's activities is to send Brainin out of the country on the grounds of his German citizenship These men know quite well that Brainin was born in Russia and had never been a German citizen."

Early in March 1916 Brainin's Der Veg reported that a warrant had been sworn accusing its editor Reuben Brainin of libelling a young man, Morris Strasberg, in a report of a court proceeding which appeared in the issue of February 25, 1916. (See chapter "Der Veg, A Paper With No Precedent.")

Der Veg wrote that "some cliques do not cease conspiring against the newspaper and its editor.

"Failing in their accusations and false charges, certain persons convinced a young man and his old father to institute a libel case against Brainin.

"Brainin was summoned on February 29 to the court to set a date for a hearing. He was accompanied by Peter Bercovitch, K.C. and appeared before Judge Lafontaine who set March 10 for this proceeding. Brainin promised to be present at the hearing.

"The youth claimed that the news report in Der Veg about his issuing a false cheque constituted a libel against him.

"Responding to a query from a representative of Der Veg, the lawyer for the plaintiff declared that it was intended to establish a test case whether the press could report all that took place in a court room.

"It is known that a similar test case had been instituted against the Montreal Standard which is being sued for damages by a man who was arrested and whose address was published in The Standard. (March 1, 1916)

"The hearings were delayed and the Jew was released on $1,000 bail."

The issues of Der Veg of June 1916 were the last to appear.

A.B. Bennett, an intimate of Brainin and of Wolofsky during the entire period and the only journalist to contribute to the Adler and Der Veg simultaneously, said later from the

perspective of experience and age, "It was one of the most sordid developments in the history of the Canadian community."

THE NATURE OF THE PROPHET

The term prophetic is applicable to the Montreal phase of Brainin's career in another more popular sense, in that his stand during these weighty months proved realistic and the events confirmed his foresight, even though he did not benefit from this vision.

Before the first World War ended it was clear that his evaluation of the extent of the destruction of August 1914 was not excessive. Judaism in the Russian empire was in ruin beyond restoration. Central European Jewry was threatened with an anti-Semitism newly rooted in the terms of their new constitutions and their minority rights; post-war Germany was rotted with Hitlerism from its first day, and the Holocaust was implicit therein.

The wreckage was mitigated solely by the Jewish mobilization which Brainin and his colleagues called for. The personnel of Der Veg, their program, their ideology and their colleagues were the rescue team. Their program of war relief - joined by the vast American Jewish Joint Distribution on the colossal scale Brainin called for, the Canadian Jewish Congress, the awakening and the unification of American Jewry, the Jewish centring upon Palestine and other "details" such as emphasis on education and on Yiddish culture, which Der Veg called for even obsessively, became the action program of world Jewry.

If Kaufman's articles of 1915 on "Canadian Jewry and its Obligations" seem in retrospect as prophetic, or at least far-sighted, as he spelled out the virtually complete agenda of the 1919 Canadian Jewish Congress, in reality it was not prophecy. The men of 1919 were following the lines of Brainin-Kaufman three years after the two men had left Canada.

Yehudah Kaufman, associate of Brainin, one of those who inspired much of Canadian Jewry during the second decade of the century, testified that "whoever did not see Brainin during his Montreal period has never seen the militant Brainin. I am happy that it has been my fortune to stand at his side and to witness the hard battle which the man of spirit fought for principles, for his faith, his aspirations and the dream of his spirit. It was the battle of a man who dreamed a wonderful vision, a dream of a new and blossoming Jewish community aspiring to spiritual riches, endowed with creative powers, a model for all the Jewry of America.

"I saw the warrior Brainin in Canada. I heard his perpetual demands and claims. I saw the people's response. Who knows but Brainin might have realized his dream of the new community, were it not for the mean oxen who destroy the vineyards. Only those of us who were witness to the great efforts which he made there can appreciate the seeds which he planted in this virgin soil.

"With the coming of long years the seeds will sprout and historians will appreciate the great dreamer and the battler who had lived among them." (Nahum Sloushzeh, ed. Souvenir Scroll on Sixtieth Birthday of Reuben Brainin, N.Y., Hatoren 1923. pp.59-61. Hebrew).

Three years after leaving Montreal, in 1919 Brainin returned in triumph to greet the fulfillment of the Canadian Jewish Congress ideal for which he had laboured so long and consistently. "The Congress has been elevated to the highest Jewish and human level, he told the closing

session.

"The Canadian Jewish Congress was indeed a great experience for all its participants. It helped to shape and to strengthen the new Jewish community in the new land. With its sessions the Congress affirmed an important epoch in the annals of Canadian Jewish history."

For decades after he left Montreal in 1916 and after his passing in 1939, scores of the most influential citizens in the Canadian community considered him their model for dignified Jewish conduct, for energetic community service and for the appropriate tone of public affairs. (Samuel Paz "Reuben Brainin in Montreal, 1912-16", Hebrew M.A. Thesis, McGill University. 1983.)

After both Brainin and Kaufman left Montreal, their influence on Canada remained active for a time. Kaufman began to issue Dos Folk (July 13-Dec.5, 1917) which promoted such communal causes as the proposed Canadian Jewish Congress, but this publication could not last long with the editor then residing in Philadelphia as a student at Dropsie College. (B.G. Sack, in "The Yiddish Press in Canada", in Yiddish Kemfer, Passover issue, 1957 pp.146-8)

The remarkable history of the Congress idea proceeded on its course over the months, in the absence of two of its great inspirers. Brainin and Kaufman were not forgotten. The convenors invited them, as well as Zhitlowsky, as guests of honour and, to cite S. Belkin, "their presence added much to the dignity, the proceedings and the decisions of the Congress."

There was a dichotomy in Brainin's Montreal life: a creative activity, durable in its consequences for world Jewry and for the community, a chapter in Canadian Jewish annals that probably had no parallel. Yet there was also his obsessive discord and negativism towards the entire Yiddish society in which he came to reside and to create.

Remarkably most of his printed record bears the distinguished names of his Yiddish associates. But his diary does not record the scores of distinguished devoted men as "having been remembered for good": A.B. Bennett, M. Garber, A. Freiman; Moshe, Yoneh and Nachum Myerson; L. Zuker, H.M. Caiserman, S. Belkin, S. Wiseman, M. Dickstein, scarcely even the central active and eminent hero in Brainin's life here, Yehudah Kaufman.

Brainin wrote many pages not for immediate publication -- diaries, impressions, notes -- which express his dislike, contempt, his unhappiness with all association with Montreal Jews and, very often, American Jews. The exceptions were largely Hebraic and other Zionist literary figures.

He found American Jews crude, materialistic, uncultured. Some of these names are now enshrined in the historic record of the continent's Jewry. He found that even the Zionists among them were not Hebraist or cultural Zionist in their philosophy and inspiration. Intimately he did not make peace with the Montreal where he had been thrown by his work in the Adler.

Brainin felt alienated from his true calling as a Hebrew littérateur, from Europe. He disliked

and despised the Montreal community and the society of the Adler readers. The public which felt free to call upon him was distracting and petty.

Even the important communal work in which he engaged enthusiastically in 1912 was unpleasant, largely because his associates were uninspired and uncultured, driven by unworthy motives -- "the remnants of flight from the generation of the deluge. There is no bridge between us."

The relationships between Brainin and the Montreal Jewish community, which he was portraying in his diary, did not become known to his friends until its publication much later. They never failed to feel betrayed by his private personal portrayal of the historic drama in which they had all acted during this epoch.

His intimate friend A.B. Bennett understood Brainin. Sympathetically he recorded that "it had chanced quite fortuitously that at about the beginning of the second decade a famous Hebrew writer -- Reuben Brainin -- chose to make his residence in Montreal, occupying the position of editor of the Yiddish daily, the Canader Adler. But Brainin was a man of wide culture and deep insight into the profundities of Jewish historic dynamism. He found Jewish life in Montreal, and in the rest of Canada for that matter, rather stagnant.

"The Orthodox middle class had settled into a routine of frustrated formalism. The Zionist organization roosted ineffectually on its little mound of stale nostalgic sentimentalism. The labour sector, with its periphery verging on radical ideology, did churn with a degree of activism. But its dynamism was not indigenous. It flowed from the well-spring of progressivist ferment in the great Jewish centre of New York. As a group on the Canadian scene it lacked identifiable purpose and direction -- an objective that would inform its strivings with a high sense of achievement.

"And our upper stratum on the socio-economic scale appeared to be suffering from want of a sense of class cohesiveness. It had no characteristic posture.

"But Brainin, the keen Hebraist and man of worldly culture, could not fail to observe the shallowness and purposelessness of the Jewish traffickings in his new environment. Having probed the depths of Jewish eschatological motivity through the vicissitudes of Jewish history, and having been actively involved in the surges of cultural revival in his own time in various centres of vital movements, he could not escape the feelings of emptiness and frustration at the sight of listless feet dragging all around him. Zionism, the synagogues, the charitarian vehicles -- where was the sacred flame of destiny, the awareness that warmed the spirit and made the Jewish persistent struggles meaningful and valuable through the ages?" ("Between Ourselves", in Jewish Standard, Dec. 1, 1966)

With the passage of time there comes a strange "settlement of accounts". Much later, after his departure from Montreal, under dramatic circumstances, these closest and most loyal and appreciative of friends remained his admirers and defenders -- even when he did not prove himself true to his own Zionist and Hebraic cause.

They never joined his detractors; but they developed an aura of embarrassed silence about him in the circle of his disciples. We note the absence of many surviving colleagues from the gallery of posthumous witnesses and defenders of his post-European career, particularly after his tragic Russian episode of the mid-1920's. After that date his name and repute came under the care of the anti-Hebraists, anti-Zionists, the communists, possibly the Arabs. It is not surprising that the flowers on his grave and his historic role have not always been kept blooming. He was left in alien communist hands, the enemies of his prime years, who managed to entrap him in Biro-Bidzhan. None of his appreciative and even grateful colleagues of his great days went into the depths to raise him or his memory. He had not really loved them in his heyday.

BRAININ'S THIRD CAREER - HORS SÉRIE

The third Brainin career -- after Vienna and Montreal -- was located in New York. It was confused, unfocused, and concluded with a tragedy nine years before his passing, a tragedy again off centre because it did not arise from a new and central concern of Brainin. Yet it was presented by foe and by friend as if Brainin had developed a new central ideology; this in spite of his protests. To his last breath, in a new political, anti-Zionist environment, he persisted in claiming loyalty to his original Hebraist, Zionist mission.

How did he come to find himself in this tragic condition?

To begin with, quite aside from the mysterious circumstances of his leaving Montreal, it is remarkable that, in spite of his profound attachment to the city, there was a strange severance with his many disciples here. Many years of persistent inquiries among these associates since that time indicate a pattern; a reluctance to discuss the broken ties (except for the case of A.B. Bennett), a continued reverence for his person, for the integrity and consistency of his Zionist fidelity, continued adherence to his 1914 perception of the world Jewish scene which culminated in his dream of the Canadian Jewish Congress, and a disinterest in his evaluation during his American phase, as if he had estranged himself from Canada and had attached himself to other conceptions of his own Judaism.

The important and complex development in Brainin's career a decade after leaving Montreal left an impression upon the entire image of the man, even though it never put in question any aspect of his activity of the preceding sixty-five years, notably his five fertile years in Montreal.

Brainin in New York did not have the Montreal environment that he might have been missing during his last years in Europe -- the Montreal of Yampolsky, Sack, the Myersons, Garber, Shmuelson, B.J. Goldstein, Bercovici, even Wolofsky; above all his young disciple Kaufman, who adopted him as both father and son. All these Montrealers made their particular careers only in this city; each of them failed to achieve greatness in New York.

In 1917 another new agent for the destruction of Jewry, particularly Russian Jewry, came on the scene. In Russia the government set about to destroy religion, Zionism, Hebrew, the *shtetl* society, national and international Jewish loyalties and other definitions of Judaism. Outside Russia the same government set afoot a program new in the world to win the support of peoples, including the Jewish populace. Septuagenarian Brainin, known for his sentiment and love of the threatened Jewish people, was a surprising target. He might have been expected to be the first to be aware of Jewish persecution in Russia.

The bait of the enemy was Brainin's own dedication to the Jewish people in his Russia and a vague communist promise of a Zion in Russia. This bait even attracted Louis Marshall and the Joint Distribution Committee for a short time. The elderly Brainin did not resist.

Remarkably, much of the Jewish community ignored the near-holocaust that was being perpetrated in Russia, the most motherland of European Jews -- where Jewish intellectuals, Zionists, pioneers, authors, teachers, ideologists, Hebraists, Yiddishists were shipped to Siberia to rot in gulags.

Brainin had spent some time in Russia in 1926 to study conditions there. He went with a delegation sponsored by the American Association for Jewish Colonization in the Soviet Union (ICOR). Upon his return, he applauded the achievements of the regime and advocated Jewish

settlement in Biro-Bidzhan. He found this settling of Jews was not only a salvation of the Jewish people but also of the Jewish spirit in Russia.

Brainin's position broke with that of the established Western Jewish intelligentsia, headed by Haim Nachman Bialik, who condemned Soviet treatment of the Jews. The conflict came to a head when Bialik signed a statement of the Hebrew Authors Association in Palestine which alerted Jewry to the destruction of Zionism and the Hebrew language in Russia, and called for a joint protest of public opinion against this development.

This statement concluded with a powerful attack on Reuben Brainin who was described as a senior Hebrew literatéur and a Zionist who, in the course of his descriptions of Russian conditions, has armed the enemy with weapons for the destruction of Judaism. He was described as a traitor and a falsifier worthy of rejection and contempt.

Brainin demanded in an open letter that Bialik and the Authors Association justify the accusation against him in a court of honour. As Bialik and Brainin happened to be in Berlin at this time, Bialik suggested that the case be placed before the Zionist court of honour in 1929. Brainin consented.

"Gronemann opened the proceedings before an overcrowded court in a state of intense tension and called upon the plaintiff to present his case.

"Brainin was physically ill and his son Joseph spoke for him and noted the shameful attack upon the honour of a veteran battler for Zionism and the Hebrew language for forty-five years, a man who had fought for a Jewish Palestine, and who had enriched Hebrew literature.

"Bialik responded in a long address. 'Brainin's name had always been dear to me, and nothing will make me rejoice more than his rehabilitation. But there is trustworthy information to confirm the charge of traitor and of falsification and destruction of Hebrew culture and of Zionism in Russia; he had suppressed such documentation from the threatened and suffering Jews there; when he was asked about them after he left Russia he denied the persecution or attempted to modify the accusation by comparing them with the suppression of Yiddish in Palestine.

"'The three million Jews of Russia are now silenced and certainly doomed to disappearance. Why was Brainin silent? Why did he not cry out the truth to the world? He had been informed fully in Russia, and the appropriate information had been placed in his hands.

"'He had promised to turn it over to the proper authorities once outside the country, and he had not done so; instead he sang hymns of praise to those who are destroying Russian Jewry. This confirms his crime against Judaism and the charge that he created weapons for the destruction of Judaism.

"'The prosecutors of the Soviet Cheka based their accusations against Zionists and Hebraists in two cases on his favourable judgement of the Soviet regime.

"'No one opposes colonization in Russia, but we object to the use of this colonization scheme against Zionists and Palestine. To support this misuse is to commit treason.'

"Brainin denied that he ever betrayed anyone by a single considered word. He never held back the truth about Russia. He attacked the communists so sharply in his address at the Sholom

Aleichem Club in Berlin that the chairman feared that communists in the hall would create a scandal. After his visit to Russia he delivered an enthusiastic lecture about his visit to Palestine. But he is convinced that nowhere in the world are Jews as secure against pogroms as in Russia, nowhere else does the government fight for the honour and security of Jews as in Russia.

"He had not been silent when he intervened with Smidowitz, vice-chairman of the Council of People's Commissars about the persecution of Zionism and Hebrew. But he is convinced that nothing can be attained by mere protests in Russia; Russian Jews can be aided by constructive help.

"He considered his activity on behalf of Russian colonization a logical extension of his Zionist ideology. From the far-ranging Zionist perspective there is no distinction between work in Palestine and in Russia. He never missed an opportunity to aid Palestinian projects and this devotion was recognized and was utilized as liaison with the J.D.C. While serving as vice-president of the Zionist organization he held a parallel post with the United Jewish Appeal. While in Russia he studied the conditions of Hebrew there.

"Bialik reiterated that Brainin had stated publicly that accusations against Russia had been libellous, and that Brainin's silence about the treatment of Zionists had done damage.

"Zionists who had managed to reach Berlin from Russia, such as Teacher Yehudah, testified weightily against Brainin for not transmitting materials entrusted to him in Russia.

"Brainin had objected to the Soviet press and the communist press in the U.S. for distorting his comments. He had stated that Russian suppression of Hebrew was comparable to the suppression of Yiddish in Palestine. He said that his Zionism is broader and more worthy than Bialik's. 'I wish the survival of the body of the Jewish people for the perpetuation of the Jewish spirit.'

"After a lengthy consultation, the judges considered and found Brainin liable.

"Though, as he admitted, he found the persecution of Jews in Russia shocking, he remained silent, has suppressed at least a substantial part of the information, and left a false impression by expressing enthusiasm for other aspects. So in effect he did supply weapons to the enemy." (Judische Rundachter, 11.X. 1929)

INDEX TO VOLUME 48

Abramowitz, 64
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 85
Anshei Sefard, 8
Aronof, F., 72, 73
B'nai and B'noth Zion, 51
Baal Machshoves (Dr. Eliashev), 68
Ballon, D., 13
Baron de Hirsch Institute, 14, 51, 52, 61, 63, 64, 79, 80, 85
Belkin, Simon, 54
Ben Zion, Ariel, 15
Benjamin, L.M., 7
Bennett, A.B., 2, 7, 78, 88, 107, 110, 111, 113
Bercovici, 4, 51, 52, 53, 66, 113
Bercovitch, A. 13
Bercovitch, Peter 1, 68, 107
Bernstein, H., 55
Bloomfield, H., 85
Borden, Sir Robert, 96
Brainin, Isaac, 7
Brainin, Joseph, 96
Bund, 27
Bundists, 21
Caiserman, H.M., 54, 66, 70, 110
Canadian Jewish Alliance, 67, 74, 80, 85, 86, 92
Canadian Jewish Committee, 71, 85, 86, 88
Central Relief, 84, 86
Chazanovitch, Leon, 55
Cheifetz, N., 72
Cloak Makers Union, 55
Cohen, Lazarus, 102
Cohen, Lyon, 51, 53, 70, 86
Cohen, Rabbi H., 76
Davis, Mortimer B., 85
de Sola, Clarence, 15, 81, 99
Der Veg, 1, 4, 15, 66, 67, 69, 78, 79, 82, 84, 86, 88, 91, 95, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 107, 109
Dickstein, M., 110
Eisner, A., 72
Empress of Ireland, 9
Figler, Israel, 7
Figler, M., 72
Folks Farband, 67, 69, 75, 77, 82
Folkszeitung, 21, 22, 55
Frank, M.Z.R., 57, 72
Frankel, Mendel, 60
Freedman, Moses Isaac, 85
Garber, Michael, 5, 78

Glazer, Rabbi Simon, 86
Goldboom, Alton, 13
Goldstick, *I.*, 72
Gordon, Rabbi Nathan, 56
Grafstein, M., 7
Hadror, 1, 2, 57, 67
Harris, A., 85
He'atid, 39
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, 70
Hebrew Sick Benefit Society, 53
Herzl, 5, 14, 45, 46, 51, 78, 96, 100, 101
Hirsch, Michael, 24
Hornstein, Myer, 79
ICOR, 113
Jacobs, M., 55
Jacobs, S.W., 64, 70, 85
Jewish General Hospital, 14, 60
Jewish Immigrant Aid Society, 60, 95
Jewish Legion, 14, 75, 96
Jewish National Radical School, 82
Jewish People's School, 75, 82
Jewish Public Library, 15, 57, 59, 60, 67, 71, 73, 82, 95, 102
Jewish Standard, 3, 5, 111
Jewish Times, 2, 4, 25
Joseph, Bernard, 96
Kahn, Ab., 24
Kellert, Sol, 85
King George Society, 53
King, Judy, 13, 14, 16
Kingston, 3, 4
Kirschbaum, J., 7
Kivenko, I., 72
Klein, Leibus, 75
Levine, H.M., 85
Lightstone, Maxwell, 51
Magidoff, V., 27
Mendelbaum, A.M., 81
Mendele Mocher Seforim, 7, 47, 101
Merkaz Hamorim (the Hebrew Teachers' Circle), 59
Merkaz Ivri (the Hebrew Centre), 59
Miller, J.B., 56
Montreal Hebrew Association, 53
Montreal Star, 67
Monument National, 27
Myerson, Jonah, 78
Neumann, Ernst, 16
Nordau, Max, 39
Noveck, H., 54
Ortenberg, Dr. (Sholom) Samuel, 4, 13, 72

Ortenberg, Miriam Brainin, 14
People's University, 15, 59, 60, 71, 75, 82
Poale Zion, 5, 15, 54, 57, 59, 71, 72, 73, 74, 83, 84, 97
Price, Rabbi Julius J., 77
Rabinovitch, Israel, 99
Reisler, Zvi, 75
Roback, Abraham, 66
Russian-Polish Sick Benefit Society, 53
Sack, B.G. 1, 4, 5, 110
Schildkraut, Rudolph, 27
Schneour, Max, 19, 23
Schneour, S., 5, 59, 85
Selinger, S., 72, 73
Shaar Hashomayim, 2, 15, 24, 51
Shoemakers Protective Society, 53
Sholom Aleichem, 7, 8, 47, 59, 115
Sick Visiting Society, 60, 61
Solomon, M., 72
Stilman, A., 13
Talmud Torah, 8, 27, 35, 51, 62, 76, 87, 102
Talpis, S., 67
Temple Emanuel, 2, 51
Vineberg, H., 54
Viner, Norman, 13
Weiner, Benjamin, 67
Welicovitch, J., 72
Wiseman, S., 110
Without Blood, 27
Wohliner, 8
Wolofsky, 1, 2, 3, 47, 53, 55, 66, 67, 68, 69, 76, 85, 95, 97, 99, 100, 107, 113
Workman, Mark, 85, 86
Workmen's circle, 59
Wortsman, 1
Yehudah Kaufman, 4, 5, 7, 16, 60, 71, 74, 78, 83, 109, 110
Yelin, S., 72
Yiddisher Kemfer, 6
Young Men's Zionist Literary Society, 53
Zangwill, Israel, 38
Zionist Organization of America, 69

BNQ
000 240 326